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ABSTRACT

This study was initiated because the author believed that the house system in the comprehensive schools of England has elements that could be adapted into many American schools to help personalize education for each student. The house system and its place in the comprehensive school is examined with reference to the general organization of the school, the need for pastoral care, and the physical requirements of a house system. Information on the operation of the house emphasizes the duties of the headmaster, head of houses, housemaster, and house tutor. In addition some aspects such as social, advising, disciplinary, and competitive functions of the house are shown. Information from many sources is used in an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the house system as they are seen by authorities and experienced school personnel. The later sections of the document describe the design and administration of questionnaires used in surveying headmasters/mistresses and students. The final chapter sums up the data and draws some conclusions about the house system in comprehensive schools. The document contains a glossary of terms, sample questionnaires, and a bibliography. (Author/MLF)

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PERSONALIZING EDUCATION: THE HOUSE SYSTEM IN ENGLISH COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOLS

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February 1, 1975

Dear reader,

This "letter" is a plea for your indulgence of the errors in typing and mimeographing as well as the wording and style which you will find in this document.

The writer had to make a choice between taking more time to revise the study, thus delaying its distribution or putting it out in rather rough, though readable style. The latter course was chosen because some of the data were in danger of becoming out-of-date and because the life of an average college teacher does not permit large amounts of time to be spent on extensive revision.

Please read the material presented here with a blind eye to the mistakes of a mechanical nature. It is hoped that the substance of the study will outweigh the deficiency in form.

Thank you for your forbearance.

RBDierenfield

Richard B. Dierenfield
Professor of Education

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FOREWORD

This study was undertaken out of the deep conviction that American high schools do not have a systematic approach toward individualizing the education process. Students are fed in at the 7th or 10th grade end and proceed rather anonymously to the point where they graduate or drop out. Sometimes counsellors are involved personally with the students but usually only if they are bright and college bound or if they are constant trouble - makers. Teachers sometimes form personal relationships with their pupils but for the most part the heavy teaching load of large classes precludes much of this. The semester course and now the "mini course" does not allow much time for personal relationships to develop. As a result, a large majority of our students go through secondary school with little individual attachment to the faculty or the certainty that any staff member will concern himself/herself with particular pupils.

After living and studying in England on a number of occasions over a period of years, the writer has been struck by the desire of English educators to exercise what they call "pastoral care" for young people in secondary school. This feeling was strengthened by the very positive experience the writer's older son had through a year as a house member in an English secondary school. When the American problem is coupled with the English

solution the present study is the almost inescapable result.

One point should be clarified at the start. The author holds no preconceived brief for the pastoral care approach afforded by the house system over other possible types, i.e. the year system or school system. All three have convincing arguments over the others as well as shortcomings which may detract from their worth. Since, under the circumstances, it was possible only to examine one approach and because the writer has seen the effectiveness of the house system it was decided to deal with it. The real point is that pastoral care is treated seriously in English secondary schools no matter which type is used and, as a result, individual problems are treated and personal development is facilitated.

The following pages contain material which, hopefully, will be of interest to both American and English educators. To Americans because it describes and analyzes a process of individualizing secondary education which could help to answer a very real problem in our high schools. To English educators because it presents some new data, not only on the house system in comprehensive schools but on the feelings of students toward their houses and the system in general.

The writer wishes to thank the many people who have helped in making this study possible:

The Chief Education Officers of the county education authorities, city borough authorities and London Borough Authorities who permitted the survey to be conducted in their areas.

The headmasters/mistresses and others who took time to fill out the questionnaire.

The headmasters/mistresses who permitted their schools to be used for the completion of pupil questionnaires.

The pupils of comprehensive schools who completed these forms telling of their feelings about houses in their schools.

The heads, housemasters/mistresses, and house tutors who gave of their time to talk to the writer about their houses and answer his questions.

The assistance of the Library staff and Mr. Guillaume at the National Foundation for Educational Research was of real value.

Finally the writer's gratitude is great to the staff of the Library of the Department of Education and Science, York Road, London, Miss Jepson, Library Director and particularly to Mrs. Byrnes, Assistant Library Director for their many services and kindnesses.

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Glossary of Terms

To the American reader:

In the following paper a number of words will be used, the meaning of which may not be clear to those unacquainted with the English system of education. These terms will be defined here.

Chief Education Officer - The person in charge of the school system of a county or city borough. They correspond to school district superintendents in the United States except that in county boroughs the area involved is often larger than most American school districts. They range from only a few schools to great areas with many schools of all types. Chief education officers are responsible to the Local Education Authority which is a part of the Borough or County government.

Comprehensive School - A general name for a type of secondary school in England which, as its name implies, takes all the students of school age who wish publicly supported education. In a number of boroughs it replaces the system which divided the schools into grammar for the most able, secondary modern for the great majority of average students, and technical for those wishing a more vocational education.

Department of Education and Science - A division of the English government which deals with general education in England from infant day care centers through graduate schools and adult education. The D.E.S. works in cooperation with Local Education Authorities on many matters of both policy and operation.

Forms - Refers to the levels of a secondary school. Forms correspond to grade levels of American high schools as follows:

7th grade = 1st Form

8th grade = 2nd Form

9th grade = 3rd Form

10th grade = 4th Form

11th grade = 5th Form

12th grade = 1st Year 6th Form

College Freshman = 2nd Year 6th Form

Most English comprehensive schools have all 6 forms, although since education is compulsory only to age 16 the 6th Forms in many schools are rather smaller than the others.

Grammar School - A secondary school which is found in many places in England and has its roots deep in history. Today it caters to those students who have marked academi ability and are selected to attend it. Public funds are used to operate it. Generally, where there are comprehensive schools there are usually not grammar schools in the same system.

Heads of Houses - A teacher (or master) of a school who has been designated as leader of the house system in that school. Usually he is responsible to the headmaster/mistress for house operation and coordinates the efforts of housemaster and housetutor in fulfilling house duties.

Headmaster/Mistress - The person who is charged with the responsibility for the successful operation of a secondary school. He/she corresponds to the high school principal except that a headmaster/mistress is a more powerful leader than most principals. The decision making power of a head, while usually exercised in wide consultation with others is much more extensive than the average principal.

Housemaster - A teacher who has been chosen, usually by the headmaster/mistress, to be in charge of a house of the school. He must see to it that the house operation succeeds and his duties extend from training tutors to dealing with parents, to keeping records straight to counselling with pupils, etc.

House System - A type of pastoral care which divides a school into "houses" usually for about 100 to 300 students. A teacher designated as housemaster leads the house assisted by other teachers called house tutors. Personal interest in and care for each student by a member of the house staff encourages closer relationships between adults and pupils. The house is a "vertical system" in that it includes students from several forms, often from 1st through the 6th form. It is sometimes combined with "year" and "school" systems.

House Tutor - A teacher who has been chosen to work with groups of 20-30 pupils usually as a part of a larger house. The duties of the tutor are usually divided between academic and personal counseling of individuals in his/her tutor group. Often he/she stays with a group from the time they enter school till they leave thus allow-

ing for a good deal of personal relationship and in-depth counseling.

L.E.A. - Local Education Authority, the official governing body for schools in a particular district. It is made up partly of elected members of the local borough council or county council plus additional persons from educational and other concerned bodies.

Merit Points - (or House Points) - Credits given for good work by pupils in a variety of areas. Competition between houses may be set up in such categories as community service, games and sports, and academic work. Teachers and tutors award merit points for unusually meritorious work in any of these areas. All the points of a particular house are totaled for a period of time and prizes are awarded for winners in this competition. In some schools demerits are given.

Mixed School - A school with both boys and girls attending in the same classes.

Pastoral Care - The process whereby the personal and academic needs of the pupils of a school are met through varying means by the staff of that school.

Prefect - A senior student or students who have been appointed to assist housemasters and housetutors in the operation of the house. They are usually 5th or 6th form students. House prefects often come from 5th form while school prefects are chosen from house prefects.

Public School - Really a private school which controls admission on the basis of its own criteria and charges tuition. Famous "public" schools are Eton, Rugby, Harrow, Charterhouse, St. Pauls, Westminster, etc.

Purpose Built School - An institution which has been designed and constructed with particular functions in mind. With reference to this study purpose built schools have special blocks for house functions.

School Systems - A type of pastoral care organization in secondary schools which divides the school into two or three parts on the basis of age levels. In two part school systems there are "Lower" and "Upper" Schools with Lower generally referring to Forms I, II, III, and IV, and upper to Forms V and VI. The three part school system involves "Lower", "Middle", and "Upper" Schools with forms split among three levels. It is partly a "vertical" system and partly a "horizontal" system. Sometimes it is combined with other systems - house and year.

Secondary Modern School - A type of secondary school used in many parts of England which students of average and below average ability attend. It is combined with the grammar school for the most able students and the technical school to form a system of secondary education in many Local Education Authorities.

Tutor Group - A small group of students (20 to 30) made up of mixed ability and headed by a faculty member as house tutor. They belong also to a larger group making up a house of roughly 100-300 pupils. The tutor group often grows into a closely knit group and the house tutor has an opportunity to become well acquainted with each pupil and can offer counsel and aid to individuals who need it.

Year System - A type of pastoral care operation called "horizontal" in which a secondary school is organized into groups according to

the year level of students in school. 1st Form would be a year group, 2nd Form and so on. Each year group is directed by a year master and smaller component bodies are cared for by year tutors. This is sometimes combined with other pastoral care grouping such as the house or school systems.

CHAPTER I

A BRIEF LOOK AT THE PROBLEM AND A POTENTIAL SOLUTION

The Problem - The problem quite simply stated and generally recognized is that a great many students attending American secondary schools are rather anonymous to school administrators and teachers. For the most part they are not the brilliant students, outstanding athletes, actors, musicians, etc., nor are they those constantly in trouble with the school or local authorities. They are the huge "middle" between the extremes - those who succeed in remaining without close contact with any teacher or other school official.

It is this large group of students which is the object of this study. It is hoped that by discribing and analyzing the "house system" as used in English comprehensive schools many elements and features will be seen as adaptable into American junior and senior high schools. Since one of the primary aims of the house system is to provide a setting whereby each student will be well known by at least one member of the staff, the relationship to the problem in American schools becomes clear.

Personal Relationships in American Schools - The large American secondary school is a fixture on the educational scene. By "large" is meant any institution with more than 1000 students enrolled. The problem is not alone one of "largeness" but of an organizational structure which does not foster close relationships between every student and one or another faculty member. The English schools, especially the comprehensive school is frequently large even ac-

cording to our definition.[1] A fundamental difference between the English and American secondary school centers on the amount of personalization through individualized faculty - student contact which exists. This statement is not meant to imply that American teachers are cold, uncerned and devoid of interest in students of their school. Or on the other hand that English teachers are uniformly devoted to the total welfare of every pupil in their school. What is being said refers to the institutional interest in the individual student as manifested in the school organization - specifically the house system. Let us briefly examine how English and American comprehensive secondary school compare regarding planned and organized systems of pupil-faculty contact.

The typical American high school is structured so that the student reports to his "homeroom" for the first 5-10 minutes of the morning. Here attendance is taken, announcements are read and administrative details are handled. The original idea behind the homeroom envisaged a much longer period of time and a much closer relationship between the homeroom teacher and each student. This concept has been eroded for many reasons to the point where, for the most part, only perfunctory, routine school business is transacted in homeroom periods.

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1 In a 1973 list published by the Department of Education and Science, over 500 comprehensive schools of over 1000 were listed.

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There are other means of contact between teachers and student to be sure. In addition to teaching contact which of course is important, but is held in common by both English and American schools, there are guidance counsellors and extracurricular activities. The guidance counsellor is generally overworked, often having several hundred students to look out for. He/she is responsible for much of the vocational-personal-academic guidance of the school and as a consequence may not even acquainted with many of his/her charges. These tend to be the non brilliant, non-troublesome middle mass. Some individual contact takes place in extracurricular activities but again it is often the talented students who take part in them and the interest of the teacher centers on the work of the extracurricular activity, not the students' broad academic and personal development. The contact between student and teacher in the course of class meetings, of course, is important and sometimes crucial if a close relationship develops. It is often haphazard and here again the teacher with 150-200 students to meet per day will attend to those in trouble or know the bright students best. Again the "middle mass" is adrift.

Personal Relationships in English House System

This picture is in direct contrast with what takes place in a comprehensive secondary school in England operating an efficient house system. This is not to say that the house system does not have problems and these will be covered later in the paper. When given enough time, space, and personnel, however the house can play a valuable part in helping each student of the school.

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The house system will be dealt with very briefly now as it will be described in detail later. It involves diving a large school into several component parts (houses) on a vertical plan. While the concept varies in practice the ideal consists of groups of 100-200 pupils forming a house with a housemaster/mistress in charge of the total group assisted by several house tutors responsible for smaller groups of 20-30 students. Ideally the student remains a member of the same group from the time they enter the school until they leave. The tutor and his group meet frequently on a social basis and there is much formal and informal counseling given. The housemaster/mistress also knows every member of the house and follows each student's progress closely. The function of the house involves not only counseling, but social development within the tutor group as well as the more diverse house group. Often a relationship is built up among members of the house through competition with other houses on both the academic and sports level. Opportunities for leadership are offered through house organization and activities. It can be seen from this short description that, if properly handled, the house system is a vehicle which can be used to help every student in a school receive guidance and personal contact encouraging maximum individual development.

The English Comprehensive School - A word of explanation should be offered here to clarify the term comprehensive secondary school. Most American high schools are comprehensive in that the great majority of students attend them and they attempt to serve all the diverse

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elements of a community. In England the situation is different. The elitist tradition in education is still strong although not as powerful as it has been in the past. Even now however, many private, selective secondary schools cater to those who want something extra for which they are willing to pay. The Education Act of 1944, still a great influence in English education, set up three types of secondary schools - the grammar school for the most able, the secondary modern for the great majority and the technical for those interested in a particular vocational type of education. Some people felt this furthered class divisions and that a single high school which enrolled children of every class and ability would help to act as a democratizing element and assist also in breaking down distinction of caste. This type of institution came into existance shortly after World War II and has grown in popularity until in 1973 a survey by the Department of Education and Science revealed 1,835 such schools in England and Wales. Unfortunately comprehensive education has become somewhat of a political football in recent years. The Labor Party has favored the comprehensive school whereas the Conservatives have generally endorsed the grammar-secondary modern split. It is not appropriate to delve into the partisan aspects of the question here. This review is given as background for the selection of the comprehensive school as the type of institution used in this study. It represents the school most closely resembling the typical American high school. If the house system can be made to operate successfully in English comprehensive schools, there is reason to feel it can be adapted to its New World counterpart.

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Very few American school officials have used a house system type division as a method of decentralizing large schools. A few secondary schools have been structured to include "schools within schools" from as long ago as 1919. By 1960 about 50 schools had some type of decentralization either vertical or horizontal. The most widely used approach has been to divide large schools into smaller schools using common facilities but each with its own administrative officers and teaching staff. One approach used by an American "school within a school" involved having all required courses taken within the smaller unit while all elective subjects would be taken through the common facilities of the large school and be open to all students. This plan has been described by Plath with some background relationship included on the house system.[2]

Before providing a description of the house system as it now exists, it may be well to set down briefly some points about its evolution. This will not only provide necessary background for an understanding of its present situation but give reference for some criticism of the system by its opponents.

House System Has Long History - The "house system" as its name implies has roots in "houses" where students lived while they went to school. Its origins extend back to the early days of organized secondary education in England. It has counterparts in the "college system" at Oxford and Cambridge where students lived together in small organized groups with leadership and discipline coming from tutors and dons and comradship coming from relations with other students in a common devotion to similar ideals.

2 Karl R. Plath, Schools Within Schools: A Study of High School Organization, Secondary School Administration Series, Teachers College, Columbia University, New York, 1965.

The "public" schools of England began by enrolling only "scholars" or those whose tuition and expenses were paid by the school foundation and who lived on the school premises. Other young men applied for admission and were allowed to attend school but could not live in the school. These "foreigners" or those who paid their own school costs often lodged with local people. At first there was no control by school authorities over the type and quality of housing for students. At Eton and other schools boarding houses were operated by "dames" for profit. Because of the flagrant advantage taken of the boys by their landladies, it became customary for students to live only in houses approved by school authorities. The next step was to appoint tutors to live in these facilities, help the boys with their lessons and supervise their conduct. The control of this organization was held by the headmaster of the school. The final step was to build or operate houses or dormitories with the school completely in charge of all aspects of the house. This plan has continued for hundreds of years at private boarding schools and is at present the method of operation under which thousands of boys and girls live at school in England.

Prefects were appointed from very early times from among the older students to help the housemaster not only with administrativ tasks, but also to assist with some instruction and administer discipline as well.

The house system was designed primarily for private boarding schools but in the last part of the 19th century more secondary

schools were being built for greatly increased demand. The advantages of the house system were such that it was felt that it should be incorporated into these new institutions. The earliest attempt to develop a house system in a typical day school is found in the Bristol Grammar School in 1892. This was followed by other schools a few years later - King Edward's High School, Birmingham (1904) and Bury Grammar School (1905). Since then it has become a commonly accepted fixture in most grammar schools.

When the comprehensive school developed after the 2nd World War some authorities felt the house system could be used to advantage in this new type of school. The establishment of the house system as a physical entity in comprehensive schools was the contribution of the Coventry Local Education Authority. Between 1953-7, eitht comprehensive schools were constructed with special sections for house quarters. These included assembly rooms - also doubling as dining rooms, study rooms, staff rooms, housemaster/mistress rooms plus cloakrooms, lockers, and lavatories.

Since the inception of comprehensive education, the problem of the pastoral care of its student body has been a subject of controversy. The issue has never been whether or not pastoral care should be given. The question has been, should it be given through the house systems--horizontal organization year system or upper, middle, and lower school groupings. It is the subject of this study to examine one of the options mentioned above to find out its potential worth to somewhat similar institutions in the United States of America.

The rest of the paper will be organized in the following way:

In Chapter II the house system and its place in the Comprehensive school will be examined with reference to the general organization of the school, the need for pastoral care and the physical requirements of a house system.

Chapter III deals with the operation of the house with emphasis on the duties of the headmaster, head of houses, housemaster, and house tutor. In addition some functional aspects will be shown such as social, advising, disciplinary and competitive (motivational) functions.

Chapter IV focuses on an analysis of the strengths and weaknesses of the house systems as seen by authorities and experienced school personnel.

Chapter V describes the design of the questionnaire study including the sampling techniques used.

Chapter VI includes results of the questionnaire studies of both the house system operation in comprehensive schools and student reaction to houses.

Chapter, VII is devoted to summing up the data and drawing some conclusions about the house system in comprehensive schools.

CHAPTER II

THE HOUSE SYSTEM IN COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOLS

The house system, it should be remembered, is a transplanted operation from the boarding, grammar school into a day, comprehensive school. The success of its work depends in considerable degree on how the school in structured, and how the system is controlled and supervised as well as the allocation of space and time for other functions. This chapter will concentrate on types of pastoral care organization within schools, the relationship of houses and physical plant, and finally the structuring of house operations within the comprehensive school.

Types of Pastoral Care in English Secondary Schools

The British have a long standing attachment to all that is personal in education and have done a very great deal to maintain the individuality of students in schools. In the days before mass education this was much more easily managed with smaller schools and lower teacher-pupil ratios. Today, with larger enrollments and bigger classes the personal touch is a matter of concern to many school people. Most of what the English have called "pastoral care" has centered around the interest taken by the school as a whole but in particular one or more faculty members about the broad personal and academic welfare of each student. Exactly how this is best done, has been, is now, and probably will continue to be a matter of controversy. Several possible approaches are used and in some schools more than one is employed at the same time. The three most

commonly found are:

The House System

The Year System

The School System.

The house system, as previously mentioned, is the vertical plan whereby students from all forms are put into a common group with a housemaster and small group tutors or counsellor-advisors. The concept is to provide a broad social interaction among students of all ages, to give the opportunity for leadership to more students, to afford academic help to those in need of it and to give the security and protection of a group to which the student belongs.

The "year" system is the horizontal approach to pastoral care where all the students of a particular form belong to a certain group, e.g. all 3rd formers (9th graders) would be placed together. A year or form master takes charge of this group with tutors handling smaller component parts of the total. The concept here is that most of a child's friends will be in his/her age group and also that pupils of a given age tend to be meeting similar problems - hence the wisdom of placing them together.

The "school" system is a combination of the vertical and horizontal plans. The number of divisions vary with the circumstances, traditions, and philosophy of the school. It is often found that a school division amounts to this:

Plan I

Lower School - Forms I & II (Grades 7 & 8)
Middle School - Forms III & IV (Grades 9 & 10)
Upper School - Forms V & VI (Grades 11, 12, & 13

or

Lower School - Forms I & II
Middle School - Forms III, IV, & V
Upper School - Form VI

Plan II

Lower School - Forms I, II & III (Grades 7, 8, 9)
Upper School - Forms IV, V & VI
(Grades 10, 11, 12, & 13)
(Form VI = Grades 12 & 13)

This 2nd Plan will look familiar to American educators as a junior-senior high school split. The difference between American and Englsih operations lies in the amount of personal attention given by the school master and school tutors to students in their groups. Also, and this can be important, the school division and the house systems are sometimes combined. Those problems which are best handled by the school are dealt with by it as are those most suited for the house are handled there. Among difficulties in this combined division of school and house is that of divided allegience by the students and the large amount of time needed to organize and supervise two such divisions as compared to only one.

Research on House System

Previous surveys of comprehensive schools have revealed the extent and type of pastoral care organization employed by these institutions. The National Foundation For Educational Research in England and Wales conducted two studies, one published in 1968 and the other in 1970, dealing with various aspects of the comprehensive school. Some selected information concerned with the house system will be reported here. The "house" as involved here refers to all such groups whether or not they were concerned with extended and deep relationship of staff with students or simply a superficial

administrative instrument for handling routine duties.

The 1968 study[3] reported that of 229 schools responding in a sample of 331, 90% had a house system.

Boys schools - 94% had houses
Girls schools - 71% had houses
Mixed schools - 92% had houses

The size of school had some influence on whether a school had houses.

Less than 600 students	- 95% had houses
601 to 1000 students	- 89% had houses
Over 1000 students	- 86% had houses

Additional information on the main purposes of the house system can be seen from the following table.[4]

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3 T. G. Monks, Comprehensive Education in England and Wales (Slough, England, National Foundation for Education Research, 1968) page 41.

4 Monks op. cit. page 43

TABLE I

Main Purpose of House System In

Comprehensive Schools

Purpose	Boys Schools	Girls Schools	Mixed Schools
Administration (Registration - notices)	35.3%	17.1%	27.1%
Social (Games - societies)	91.2%	68.6%	88.2%
Curriculum	17.6%	5.7%	14.5%
Vocational Guidance	24.4%	11.4%	17.9%
Personal Guidance	58.8%	17.1%	32.4%

An apparent anomoly was revealed by another survey published only two years later. Of a sample of 958 comprehensive schools to which 728 responded only 35% had houses of any kind at all.[5] This compares to a figure of 90% only two years before. Some details of the Benn-Simon study show that:

17% of the schools had only a house system of organization

13% of the schools used house system plus upper, middle, and lower school organization

5% of the schools combined a house system with a year organization

It was found that the most common type of internal organization in comprehensive schools was the "year type" - used in 40% of the schools.

5 Caroline Benn and Brian Simon, Half Way There: Report on the British Comprehensive School Reform (London, McGraw Hill, 1970) p. 219.

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Another survey conducted by the National Foundation for Educational Research supported the Benn, Simon findings. This work found that of 50 comprehensive schools which responded, only 11 had "strong" house systems while 7 used houses but they were of secondary importance to other forms of organization.[6]

The discrepancy between the Monks study of 1968 and the later investigations in terms of the use of the house system probably has sound explanation but cannot be explored at this time. Since the comprehensive school is a new institution it is likely to undergo rapid changes expecially as many such schools have been built recently. It is all the more necessary, therefore, to obtain up-to-date information on this dynamic type of institution.

The findings of the writer's survey shed light on the subject, revealing that of the 138 schools responding (83 ±% of sample) over 59% did have a house system. (Refer to Chapter VI for details). This conflicts with the apparent decline shown in the surveys mentioned above. Much additional information on this whole matter is found in Chapter IV.

The Physical Plant and the House System

The matter of controversy among educators in comprehensive schools deals with the question of whether or not a house system can

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6 T.G. Monks, Comprehensive Education in Action (National Foundation for Educational Research, Slough, Bucks., England, 1970) p. 37.

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be operated effectively in buildings not especially constructed for them. This issue is of real interest in any discussion as to whether this type of organization can be adapted to American schools since most of them will not have been erected with the house system in mind.

After reading the literature on the subject, visiting schools and talking to headmasters and housemasters mistresses, it appears to the author that it is fair to say this about the matter. Schools that are purposely built for houses make their operation much easier but two other considerations are of even greater moment. The first is the organization of the system - the amount of time and support given and the responsibility and power placed into house operation. The second is the skill, personality, and dedication of the housemaster/mistress and house tutors in making the system work.

The following recent description of the house operation in a London comprehensive school shows what can be done with very minimum physical facilities, but a strong belief in the system and a desire to make it work.

> "The house is a very real home to each boy; he wears its flash (house patch or emblem), he plays sports for it and he receives his academic reports, his medical cards and all educational and pastoral guidance through it. The house room is open before school; at morning break for talk and a canteen; at lunch for meals, for games and talk; after school for over an hour for games or talk or a place to do homework; one or two evenings a week each house has a Club Evening until 9:30. . . . There is no School Parents Association, only House Associations."[7]

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7 Caroline Benn and Brian Simon, op. cit., p. 223

Another writer, however, emphasizes the concept of "territorial imperative" in house operations and with it the importance of a physical entity for the house:

> Where there are house rooms, small halls, house dining rooms and cloakrooms, it is possible for the group of people who fortuitously form the house within a large day school to develop a feeling of belonging. Without such physical bases the development of a house system feeling is very difficult; makeshift meeting places instead of house rooms or house blocks emphasize the unrealistic side of the house system."[8]

Pounds, in his study of the house system concluded that a strong house system almost always had physical units around which it could build its activities.

It may be helpful for those who have not had the chance to visit a school with a house block to study sample plans of two buildings: to note placement and physical set up. The first plan comes from Skelmersdale Comprehensive School, a large institution with 2000 pupils, in Lancashire. The floors shown come from one of several "teaching blocks" in the school and indicate how one floor (ground floor in this case) is organized exclusively for house use. It is occupied by two houses with separate facilities but sharing a kitchen. On the floor above, closeby, are classrooms for instruction in required subjects - often taught to pupils in the house by house tutors and housemaster/mistress.

The second plan shows the Portishead Comprehensive School in Somerset with rather similar facilities arranged in a slightly different fashion. Each house contains 150 pupils and is served by one housemaster/mistress and 5 house tutors.

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8 Ibid. p. 227

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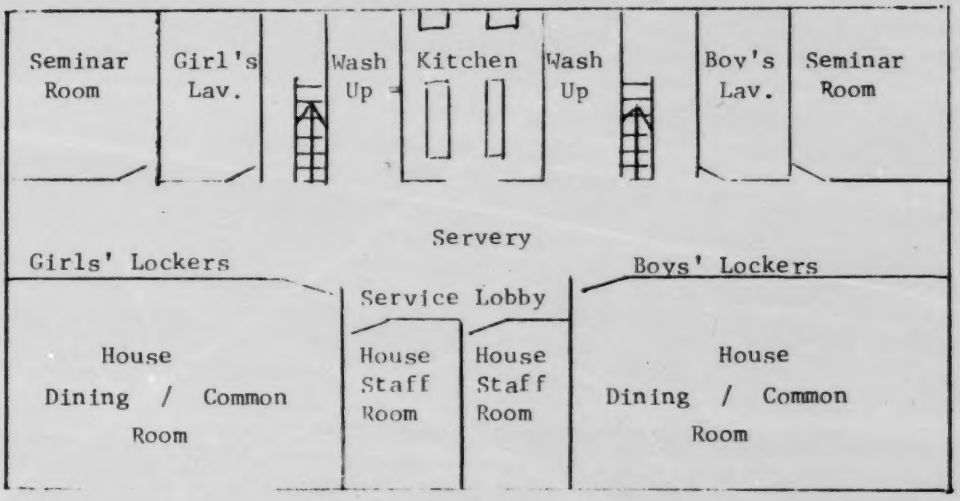
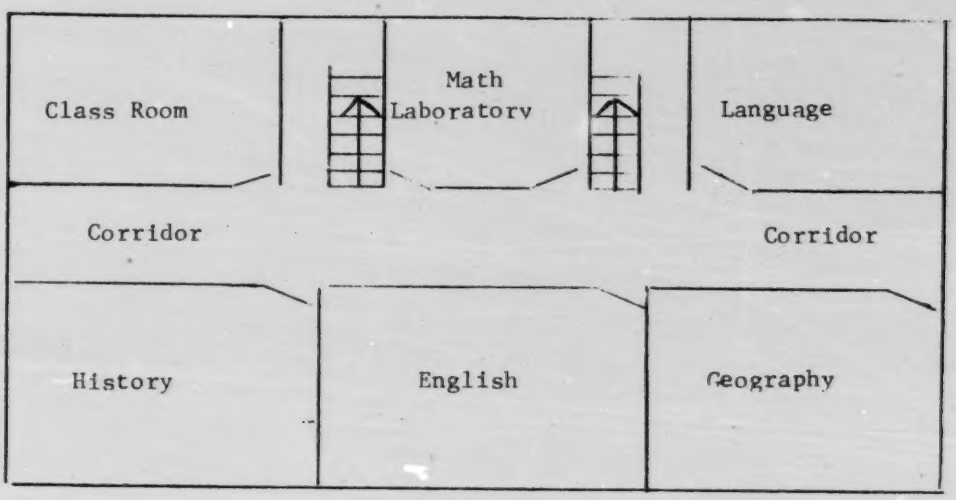
Floor Plan I [9]

Skelmersdale Comprehensive School (Lancashire)

Ground Floor (from one of several teaching blocks)



First Floor



9 Architects Journal Information Library, August 5, 1970, pages 302-3.

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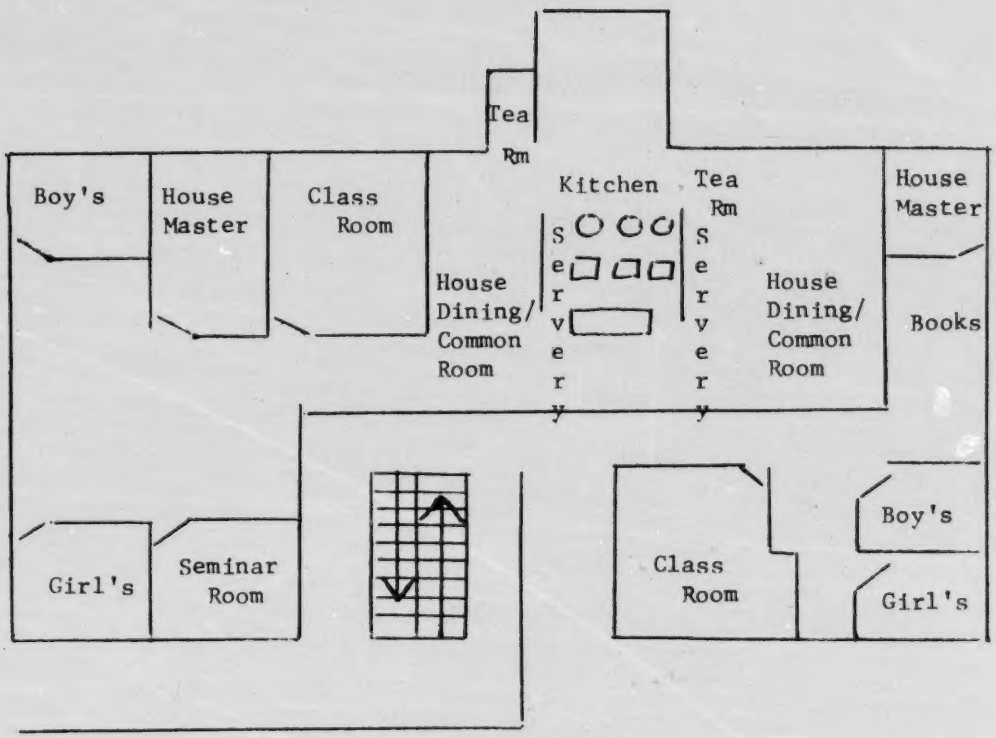
Floor Plan II [10]

Portishead Comprehensive School (Somerset)



10 Education, November 24, 1967, pages 850-52.

The organizational system of the comprehensive school has tremendous impact on the effectiveness of the house system. Of course, where they choose to structure the school on bases other than the "house" it does not matter, but when the house system is the method of operation or one of the methods, how it is organized is crucial. The amount of time, space, authority, facilities and skilled personnel, are all factors of great importance in how successful the house system can become.

In some schools only routine tasks are given to houses and as a consequence neither the teachers or the students take houses very seriously. In other schools however houses play a most important role in the school lives of its members. An example of how a large (2000 students equivalent of junior through senior high levels) secondary school uses the house system as a corrective for size is seen in the following quotation:[11]

> "The school is divided into eight Houses which are located in four House blocks, two Houses to a block. Each House has its own assembly hall and staffroom. The two assembly halls can be joined to make one large hall for lunch, House parties and dances. Approximately 250 children live in a house. They assemble as a unit in the House, and eat as a House. They are looked after by some 12 or 13 staff and in so many ways they seem like a small school within a school. The younger children have a strong sense of belonging to a House and enjoy keen competition for trophies."

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11 Incorporated Assn. of Asst. Masters in Secondary Schools, Teaching in Comprehensive Schools: A Second Report (Cambridge, The University Press, 1967) p. 42.

It is obvious that the problem of depersonalized education in this big institution has been dealt with in such a manner as to strengthen the feeling of group membership, encourage social contact and provide for greater individual pupil-tutor contact. The house system in this school is important to its total operation.

House System Organization

In order to understand the organization of the house system it is necessary to appreciate the authority structure. The following chart shows how each group and individual fits together and where responsibility falls.

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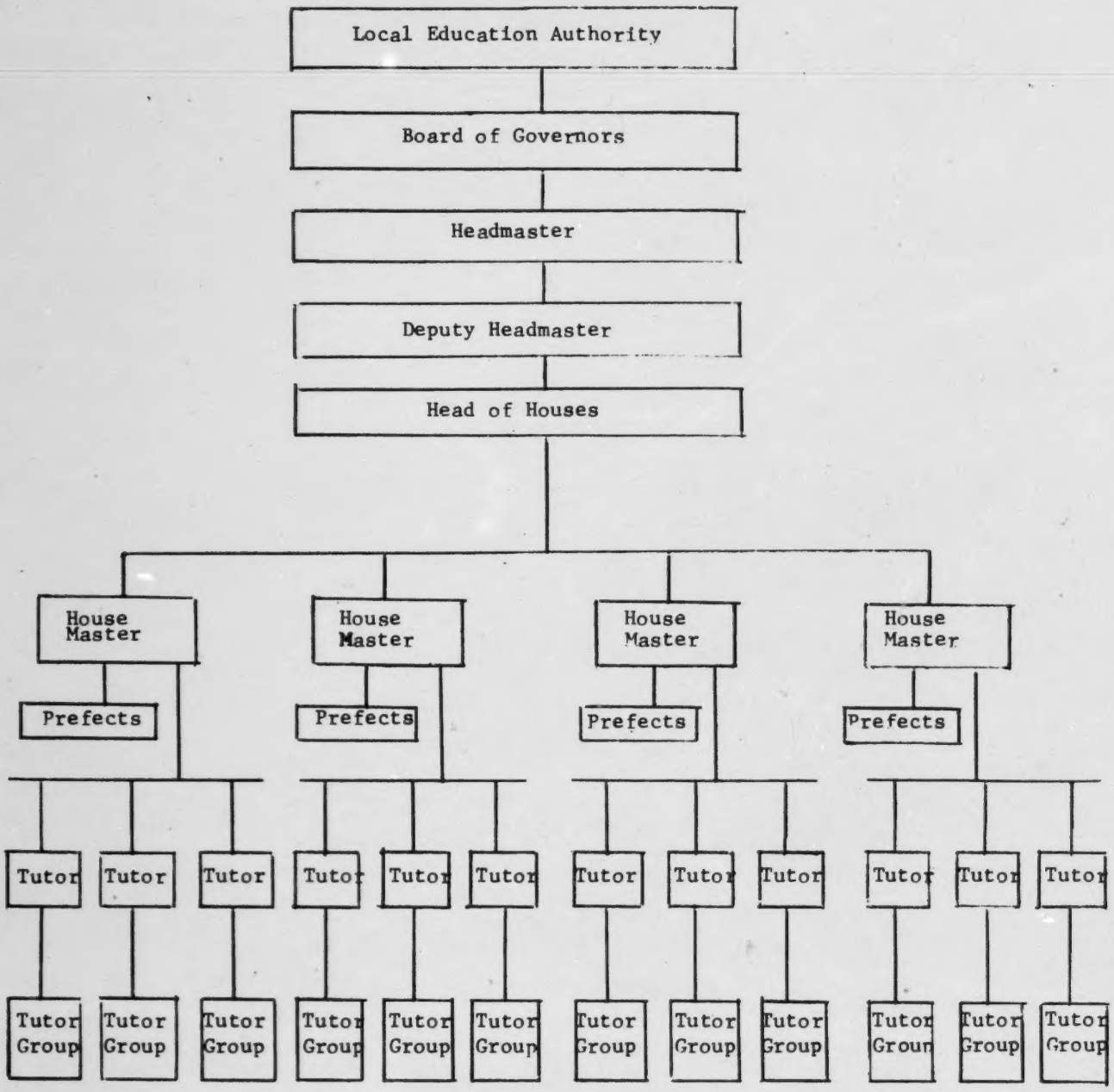
Chart I

Authority Flow Chart for House System



It can be seen that in this hypothetical school there are four houses each with a house master in charge. Because this is quite a small school each house has about 100 students in it with three house tutors under each housemaster. Prefects usually are responsible to the housemaster. A senior faculty member acting as head of houses is responsible for the total house operation. He/she may report directly to the headmaster/mistress or in some cases to the deputy head and so on through the chain of command to the Education Authority.

There is often a "house committee" composed of housemasters and the head of houses for the school. This group usually meets periodically to deal with common problems of house operation. House tutors also find it is to their advantage to get together on a regular basis to pool ideas, share experiences, and face issues arising from their duties.

In some schools because of the counseling and guidance aspects of the house and its actual instructional functions, parents and teachers have organized themselves into House Parent Associations rather than the more traditional Parent Teacher Association for the whole school.

This chapter has focused on the general place of the house system in comprehensive secondary schools. Reference was made to types of organization other than the house approach. Some background data on the extent of house systems in England was given and a description of the physical orientation of house facilities followed. Finally a flow chart showed a typical organization pattern for a house system in comprehensive schools. The next chapter will deal with what happens in a house -- what it does.

CHAPTER III

THE HOUSE SYSTEM IN OPERATION

How does the house function to satisfactorily fulfill its role as a place where students receive personal attention, advice, encouragement, discipline and where they feel secure and among others whom they like and relate to? This chapter will outline how a house is organized, the roles played by its leaders and some of the activities it uses to carry out its responsibilities. We will look at what key people in house system do to support its operation. First of all the headmaster/mistress.

The headmaster/mistress. The position of headmaster/mistress in an English secondary school usually carries with it more power than that of a high school principal in the United States. In many ways he/she is autonomous in directing the progress of his/her school. This is not to say that he/she does not consult staff on most matters of importance, but the final decision very often rests with him/her.

In this connection the role of headmaster/mistress is crucial to the function of the house system or even whether or not the school will use that type of organization. If the head is vigorously opposed to a strong house system in a given school the chances are good that it would not be established or function successfully. Conversely, if a head was greatly in favor of an extensive house system it would most probably set up and operate with adequate resources.

The head has great power in deciding matters of function for houses, amount of support in terms both of monetary matters and staff time. Such questions as the nature of the physical plant given to house operations, should there be house dining facilities, should housemasters be given separate offices and other similar matters rest substantially in the hands of the head. In addition to these basic considerations, the support given by the headmaster/mistress to the day-to-day functioning of houses helps to determine their ultimate success or failure. If he/she wants to open doors the house will tend to flourish, if doors are closed the system will wither.

Besides the essential role referred to above, the head, often in conjunction with members of his staff - makes the placement of students into various houses as they enter a comprehensive school. This is done in such a way as to not only keep a house reasonably heterogeneous but to keep various houses in balance in terms of scholastic and athletic ability. When pupils are sent to a comprehensive school, personal educational information accompanies them. It is to these records that the head refers for background in placing new pupils in houses for the needed balance. It is quite obvious that the school headmaster/mistress plays a role of critical importance in the success of house operation. The effectiveness of the system also depends on another individual - the head of houses.

The head of houses. This person has direct general oversight over all matters concerning the operation of houses in a particular school. He/she is generally appointed by the Head and selected

for his/her experience as a master and as a house leader with the confidence of other housemasters/mistresses. He/she coordinates all elements of the total house operation, oversees the work of individual housemasters, helps with in-service training of housemasters, functions as chairman for the house committee, makes sure that routine paperwork is completed, expedites a constant flow of information to individual houses and in general acts as a "troubleshooter" for the house system of the school. He serves also as a liasion between the houses and the formal instructional wing of the school, that is, the academic departments.

Housemaster/mistress. If any link in the chain is more crucial than another it may be the housemaster/mistress. Within the little community known as "the house" his role is leader, planner, counsellor, trainer of tutors, dispenser of justice, keeper of records and general factotum for the welfare of the group. If the house system is to play a vital part in school operation, housemasters must function well.

These leaders are appointed by the headmaster/mistress generally from those teachers who have had experience as tutors and whose personality and mental qualifications point to success with the duties involved. They are often given an office of their own, paid more than others and teach lighter loads. Yet the work involved is such that even with these considerations most are overworked. In American high school role considerations they would be thought to be a combination of assistant principal (administration and discipline),

guidance counsellor (educational and personal counsellor) extra curricular adviser (setting up social events, sports activities, etc.), teacher (supervising tutor groups and instructional sections) and school social worker (contacts with parents).

This above would be true only if the house is an important part of the school operation. If it is weak of course the duties of the housemaster are correspondingly less demanding.

Since the housemaster has such an encompassing and important role in house operation it may be revealing to note in rather general terms the duties of office. This list is more suggestive than exhaustive.

1. Train novice house-tutors
2. Train Head boys/girsl and/or prefects
3. Oversee maintenance of student files
4. Take care of routine administrative paperwork (These duties will be examined in more detail shortly).
5. Administer regular house functions, i.e. appoint tutors to oversee dining room, playground duty, house assemblies, sports activities, house evening social events, etc.
6. Interview and counsel with individual students in his/her house
7. Interview parents whose children are having some kind of difficulty at school
8. Act with other house masters as a house council for the whole school
9. Act as liasion with tutors and top school administrators to keep flow of information going in both directions.
10. Dispense discipline if needed - although often the first line in this regard is the department head in who's department the misbehavior has taken place. Ultimate responsibility for discipline lies with the headmaster/mistress.

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11. Lead individual house council made up of house head and tutors in planning activities for whole houses and in dealing with common problems

12. Lead and often plan weekly house assemblies

13. Maintain relationships with agencies outside the school such as child welfare groups, educational psychologists, police, etc. This is often done in conjunction with the head of houses and headmaster/mistress.

14. Other duties which may be peculiar to given situations.

House Tutors. Associated with the housemaster/mistress in house operation are tutors. They act as a team and no matter how dedicated and knowledgeable the housemaster may be, unless the house-tutors are doing their job well the house will not be effective.

The tutor is in direct contact with the students through his tutor group of roughly 30 pupils. Sometimes, if the tutor stays at the school in the same capacity for several years a student would have the same tutor for his/her entire secondary school career.

The house tutor has the responsibility for pastoral care and guidance for his small group. There is close liasion with the housemaster by both formal and informal means. The tutor ideally becomes a person with whom each pupil in his/her tutor group has a special relationship. The tutor takes a genuine interest in each individual and acquaints himself about the pupils' interests, skills, asperations, family background, jobs and any information which would be of help in advising. The responsibilities of the tutor cover everything concerning children in his/her group. He/she is responsible for the general welfare of the members of the group and plays an im-

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portant part in their development as individuals. He/she is the one constant factor in the child's school life and forms the link between "impersonal" authority and the child. These are rather general statements and are important in trying to delineate the tutors role. To further focus on a tutors activities may contribute to an understanding of what he/she does to further the house program.

House tutors generally undertake the following tasks:

1. Meets with each pupil in his/her group on a formal basis for progress reports and status checks

2. Confers with students on an informal basis to build relationship and afford a less structured forum for counseling

3. Attends to the paperwork for his group, i.e. marks attendance register, keeps pupil record cards up-to-date, makes personal reports to parents, etc.

4. Supervises a section of the house dining room

5. Checks and initials homework done in the house study area

6. Gives out school notices and publicizes school activities

7. Ensures that each child wears the school uniform and is equipped for the day's work.

8. Takes an interest in each boy/girl in the tutor group making sure they are able to cope with the work. The tutor makes sure to have an up-to-date picture of each childs school situation - success and problem areas.

9. Is knowledgeable about the extra-curricular activities and out of school doings of his/her group and encourages involvement in school and other activities.

10. Holds meaningful discussions in the tutor group. There is generally no limitation on the topics covered although subjects will most often be related to school affairs.

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11. Makes a great effort in the direction of personal counseling and tries to form a meaningful, constructive relationship with each individual in the group.

12. Is responsible for the discipline of the pupils in the tutor group. This is carried off in the light of good personal relationship, hopefully, and is as often support as punishment.

13. Plans and carries out group activities - sports, social and educational

14. Trains house prefects or monitors in their duties

A final comment comes from an experienced tutor to whom the writer spoke in a large London comprehensive school. "Tutoring", he said, "is at least as important as teaching a subject".

House Prefects - The last group of persons who are directly involved in house operation are students themselves. They are variously referred to as house prefects or house monitors, and are chosen by the house staff, usually from the 5th Form (11th grade). Their duties involve assisting housemasters/mistresses and tutors with routine work and helping to maintain decorum and discipline among younger house members. When chosen the prefects are often expected to declare their promise to fulfill their duties before the entire house. Generally each house tutor has a prefect or monitor to assist him/her and several have expressed to the writer their dependance on them as a means of coping with their tutor groups.

House Activities - Up to this we have been concerned with the roles and duties of the people who are involved in making the house system work. Let us now turn to examine some of the activities which are carried out in a typical house operation. Included here are items properly classified as administrative function as well as

those directly involving students.

Pupil Records and Paperwork - The maintenance of current and complete records and pupil information files is vital to the success of the house system. This work falls to the housemasters/mistresses and tutors. They not only fill in regular data but actively seek out all types of information which could be helpful in the process of pastoral care. While houses vary in the amount and detail of the records kept, the following list could be typical of the material kept in a strong house system.

1. House Tutors Confidential Leg - a cumulative record by the pupil's tutor on each young person in the tutor group.

2. House Tutor's Record - contains marks and comments by specialist teachers on each pupils work and attainment.

3. House Tutor's Evaluation - summary of the tutors opinion of each pupils all-around development, activities, committee membership, sports activities, etc.

4. Head of House Parents Report Comment - remarks by the housemaster/mistress on the quality of behavior and achievement as communicated to each pupils parents.

5. Pupils School Record Folder

   a) Pupils School Record Card - courses taken, marks received, absence reports, etc.

   b) Parents Reports - letter marks and written teachers evaluations of pupils work.

   c) "Pro Formas" on pupils - personal information sheets age, address, other personal data on students and family background

d) Copies of important communications among house staff, parents, counsellors and headmaster/mistress dealing with the pupil.

Other data may be kept by houses in various schools but this could be considered fairly representative. The maintenance of these files is the responsibility of the housemaster/mistress and constitutes an important part of his/her work.

Games - Sports competition among houses constitutes a prominent feature of house life. Indeed in some schools it represents the only real activity in which the house engages. The type of sport may vary widely depending on student interest, facilities available and coaching skill represented in the house staff. Those more commonly found are soccer, rugby football, cricket, basketball, track, swimming, field hockey and chess. Because of the nature of the loyalties in some schools inter-house competition may be keener than among schools. One varsity soccer coach in a Coventry comprehensive school, in speaking to the writer maintained that almost invariably when a pupil was a member of both house and school teams, he exerted greater effort for the house than the school in games. Records are kept by the schools and at the end of the year prizes are awarded to the champion house in particular sports as well as best house in overall sport.

Academic Competition - Houses vie with one another not only in games but in the arena of intellectual effort and achievement. "Points" are awarded by teachers to pupils who exceed what would normally be expected of them in view of their ability. This tends to eliminate unfair competition between slow, average and brilliant students. If a pupil writes a theme or completes an assignment which, in the judgment of a teacher, constitutes a first class effort he/she could be awarded, for example, two house points.

This is communicated to the housemaster/mistress and the head of houses to be added to the total point score for the pupils house. At year end prizes are given to best academic house. Students making outstanding effort are also recognized.

Some schools not only give merit points but, if the case warrants it, demerits can also be imposed. This reduces the house point total and is thought to be a motivational factor in both academic achievement and behavier. The peer pressure brought upon individuals by housemates to help the house by accumulation of points or at least not incurring demerits can be a factor in pupil behavier and scholastic effort.

Discipline - Matters of pupil misbehavier are often handled by the house staff. If the indiscretion takes place in the classroom the individual teacher and possibly the department head deal with it. If it is serious or repeated it is reported to the student's tutor who informs the housemaster/mistress. If punishment is felt necessary, detention and non-physical means are handled by the tutor or house leader. Physical punishment, if given, is usually administered only by the deputy head or headmaster/mistress. Some English authorities feel this disciplinary aspect tends to inhibit the effective relationship between pupils and house staff.

Community Improvement - Another activity rather commonly found is that of working for community welfare. House groups may undertake to help improve the environment by cleaning up areas in the locality, streams or badly littered neighborhoods. Collection

of food and sweets for elderly persons or needy families may be carried on at Christmastime. Fund raising for worthy charities may be handled by house groups. Points for such community service are often given and "best house" prizes for this activity are awarded.

Socializing and Intellectual Activities - Other enterprizes frequently a part of house programs are social or educational in nature. During assemblies speakers are invited to share thair views with the students or debate on issues of importance. Field trips may be taken to centers of cultural, educational, social or sports interest. House socials are held at school with a variety of formats. These may vary from the simple card or chess night to an elaborate dinnerdance or theater party. Such events afford leadership opportunities to many pupils in planning and execution as well as broadening the horizons of house members and helping to cement the sense of belonging and camaraderie needed for a successful house.

Tutor groups, while part of the house, held activities of their own. These occasions are often similar in type to what is done on the all-house level. They offer an even more intimate setting for interpersonal relationships experiences to develop.

This chapter has been devoted to a description of the roles of house leaders and a summary of activities common to many house systems. We will next turn to a consideration of the "pros" and "cons" of the system as it appears in comprehensive schools.

CHAPTER IV

THE HOUSE SYSTEM: ITS STRENGTHS AND WEAKNESSES

"It is the heart and soul of this school".
(comment by one headmaster)
"I wouldn't touch it with a 14 foot barge pole"
(comment by another headmaster)

The subject of the house system in comprehensive schools, to the mild surprise of the writer, has turned out to be a most controversial matter. Strong feelings in favor are matched by equally violent sentiments against with all variations in between the two extremes. Reaction, of course, has been conditioned by each individual's personal experience with the system. Virtually nothing in the educational process is regarded as an unmixed blessing by all participants and this is certainly true of the house system.

The merits and demerits as given here have been gathered from many sources. The literature on the subject has often been written from a subjective point of view either favorable or against and contains numerous "pros" and "cons". Reactions gained by speaking to headmasters/mistresses are also included. In addition written comments supplied by respondents to the questionnaire sent out by the writer are quoted where appropriate.

The personal feelings of the writer will be kept out of this treatment as much as this is possible. The reader is reminded

of thesis stated early in this paper: The house system has something to offer American secondary schools toward making education a more personal and individualized process. The purpose of this monograph is to examine the house system objectively dealing with it as it is, applying no whitwash or placing it in an unduly favorable light. With this sentiment on record let us proceed to list statements favorable to the house system.

Arguments Supporting the House System

1. "It places the individual. It gives him a meaningful existence. An Upper, Middle and Lower School does not do this. Housemaster and tutor try to remove the problems which hinder the full development of the child"[12]

2. "It provides a social unit of reasonable size, within which individual pupils can find dignity, security and a sense of belonging to a group with a corporate identity and demanding loyalty from its members".[13]

A third statement from the same source reflects the general feeling of the membership of the organization publishing the report and refers to the controversy about the need for purpose built structures for effective house operation.

3. "Special buildings or ordinary buildings..... the experience of our members is that a good house shows its power in better behavior from happier boys who develop talent and personality in a rewarding way".[14]

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12 Incorporated Association of Assistant Masters in Secondary Schools, Teaching in Comprehensive Schools: A Second Report (Cabridge, The University Press, 1967) p. 43

13 Ibid.

14 Ibid., p. 44

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Another quotation which deals, albeit rather tangentially, with a supposed shortcoming of the house system:

> 4. "The artificiality of the original division (into houses) is naturally the chief drawback to such a system: but it is wonderful how quickly a house spirit begins to show itself and of course everything is done to foster such a spirit."[15]

The pastoral-individual relationship between pupils and house leaders is emphasized in this statement by the headmaster of a large comprehensive school.

> 5. "A stable home base is established for the pupil by the house head and his team. There is concern for the welfare and progress of pupils in their charge and the opportunity is provided for each pupil to bring his/her troubles to a member of the staff who will care".[16]

The following points are not direct quotations but paraphrase ideas often raised in favor of the house system.

> 6. It presents an opportunity for social grouping in a mixed age environment. Most students spend a good deal of time in their own age group while in classes - houses are made up of pupils of varying ages and can therefore widen the social milieu of students.
>
> 7. A further broadening of social contact is provided by the heterogenous mixing of pupils from differing social background and academic aptitude which in a "streamed" (homogeneously grouped) school might not occur.
>
> 8. Students not only establish a close relationship with a member of the school staff (house head or tutor) but this can continue over a period of several years since they usually remain in the same house during their school career.

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15 Cyril Norwood and Arthur Hope, The Higher Education of Boys In England, (London, John Murray, 1909). p. 432

16 Albert Rowe, The School As A Guidance Community, (Hull, Pearson Press, 1971)

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9. In a house system individual abilities are recognized earlier and their development facilitated.

10. Behavior problems can also be diagnosed as they appear and corrective action can be taken

11. Cooperation among members of the staff increases on behalf of the individual pupils - responsibility cannot be shifted to others and as a consequence interest and concern rises.

12. Student involvement in extra-curricular activities grows as a result of smaller groups and less competition for places.

13. Leadership opportunities are greater as positions are spread among fewer pupils in houses and tutor groups.

14. The headmaster/mistress is able to concentrate more exclusively on matters of policy since some of the routine administrative function is taken by housemasters/mistresses and heads of houses.

15. Disciplinary control is improved because student anonymity is lessoned through membership in house and tutor groups where each student is known well.

16. Motivation for activities, academic, social and athletic is enhanced by competition among houses.

17. Younger students receive an identity in the larger school from belonging to a smaller component within it where they are known and cared about.

The reader is referred to the appendix where a section can be found which includes remarks on the house system by the respondents to the survey. It is divided into three parts; "comments pro", comments contra" and "comments about" the house system. Personal feelings are expressed and additional arguments "for" and "against" are listed.

Opposition to The House System

Because of the controversial nature of the house system educational literature contains points raised against this approach

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to pastoral care. The following list summarizes a number of the criticisms to the use of houses in comprehensive schools. Again, as in the preceeding section, no order of importance is implied by the placement of ideas.

1. There is a tendency to separate the 6th Form and the 1st Form from a house because of "special needs", leaving the 2nd, 3rd, 4th and 5th Forms to make up the house. This reduces its heterogeneity and consequently one of its strengths.

2. The practice of piling on house duties without really allowing instructors enough relief time from teaching, frustrates the individual and prevents him/her from doing either job well.[17]

3. Whether or not it is really necessary to have a purpose built school for houses to operate effectively is a matter of lively discussion. It is a fact that in a number of articles on the subject, writers have argued strongly that without what they consider adequate facilities, the house system connot function efficiently.

4. Unless properly handled, the house might be identified in the minds of students as a purely disciplinary device.

5. Because in house operations it is usual to give leadership roles to older pupils, the younger ones feel they have little chance for such positions.

6. House groups are often purely social units separated from the formal teaching-learning structure. It has been argued that these areas should be blended so that the housemaster/mistress and tutors are seen by housemembers as teachers as well as guidance personnel.

7. Much activity in houses arises from competition among groups and individuals. This emphasis can be taken to extremes, leading to harmful effects on sensitive students.

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17 Some support for this argument comes from two sources: The writers survey found that about 1/3 of the schools did not lighten housemasters/mistresses teaching load. The same situation was discovered by Caroline Benn and Brian Simon, op. cit., p. 222.

8. The stress on house activities and house loyalty can lead to the house becoming much more important than the school in the eyes of students.

9. The qualifications of housemasters/mistresses to handle rather sophisticated counseling of students has been questioned. They have been called "enthusiastic amateurs" who could do more harm than good if they view themselves as counseling psychologists.

10. Serious question has been raised as to whether or not the spirit and concept of the "house" can be implanted in the state operated comprehensive school Especially doubtful are some who have known the special relationship which often existed between housemasters and their "boys" and among members of a house in private boarding schools. One headmaster of a London comprehensive school put it this way, "A house system in a day school----has tended to be a weak, artificial imitation of the real purposeful organization of the public (private) school"[18]

In attempting to evaluate the points raised in favor or opposed to the house system several issues can be mentioned.

1. Many of the conclusions have been drawn on the basis on one persons experience. It is common to generalize from individual, first-hand encounter but frequently a more complete picture can be obtained by counsulting a member of others in similar circumstances.

2. A good deal of what has been written critical of the house system, may result from a misuse of the basic concept or its application in a situation where difficulties would preclude much chance of success. The basic idea is sound, but because of a shortage of staff, lack of proper facilities, or other problems, the execution has not matched the plan.

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18 Caroline Benn and Brian Simon, op. cit., p. 226

3. Some reactions concentrate on one or another supposed weakness of the system, and because of it, wish to discard the whole program - thus throwing the baby out with the bath water.

4. In all the comments the choice is never between the house system and no pastoral care plan. Some heads prefer the year plan, school plan or a combination, but always the concern for taking care and interest in the individual is evident, although sometimes through differing means.

5. Some heads have used a rather eclectic approach in combining systems, adapting what is best from several plans and fitting it into a program to satisfy a particular situation.

6. Finally, of course, many have been convinced by sound, rational reasons plus personal experience that one pastoral care system is superior to another.

One basic commitment, however, rings throughout all that is written on the subject as well as the responses received from the heads who answered the questionnaire survey. It is the feeling that the welfare of the individual child is important and that mass education need not mean the depersonalization of learning and anonymity of pupils in large schools. If this can be accomplished in English education it can also be achieved in American school!

CHAPTER V

THE DESIGN OF THE SURVEY STUDY

For a study of this nature, in which the current status of an institution or practice in education is under examination, information is often gathered by means of a questionnaire. The writer is aware of the pitfalls of such a procedure and has taken measures to reduce the shortcomings of the approach. Care is exercised in making generalizations and the means employed to secure the data will now be explained in some detail. In most cases the data is reproduced so that each reader will be free to make inferences from the information provided.

In completing the study, several steps were followed to accumulate background and perspective which led finally to the actual survey itself. These stages will now be described so that the progress and structure of the investigation can be more clearly understood.

STEP I - PERSONAL BACKGROUND

The writer, after making numerous visits to England and living there several years, has had an opportunity to observe many schools and confer with a good number of heads and teachers. This experience has broadened his perspective and given a breadth of opinion helpful in dealing with the subject. In addition, his older son spent a year in a house, which resulted in such a positive and helpful influence on his development, that its potential for American schools became obvious.

STEP II - THE LITERATURE ON THE SUBJECT

In order to become familiar with what has been published about the house system in comprehensive schools, the writer used two

important sources of such information. First, the Library of the Department of Education and Science, Elizabeth House, York Rd, London, was an excellent repository of relevant material on the general subject. Second, the Library at the National Foundation for Educational Research in England and Wales at Slough, Surrey, also contained much that was useful. This organization has done a good deal of reseach on many aspects of English education including comprehensive schools. In both places staff kindness and helpfulness were of the highest order.

The amount of specific, factual information obtainable, was not actually very great however. While the studies done by Monks, and Benn and Simon were very worthwhile, they dealt with the broad subject of the comprehensive school. As a consequence, the emphasis on the house system was not heavy. Other books tended to center on personal experience with house systems and included philosophical statements on them by masters and heads.

An American, Ralph Pounds, under a grant from the United States Office of Education, studied the house system in 1968, but nowhere could a copy of his work be found.

STEP III, VISITS TO COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOLS

The writer has been priviledged (not an overstatement!) to visit many secondary schools and talk to headmasters/mistresses and teachers about house operation. While no individual schools will be identified, the areas can be mentioned: Bristol, Ipswich, Welwyn City, Stevenage, Coventry, Guildford, Inner London and several London Borough Authorities. Much that was helpful came through

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these contacts, not only in hearing about the theoretical basis of the house system, but in understanding the day-to-day problems of operation and observing houses in action and noting building facilities.

STEP IV - QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY ON THE STATUS OF THE HOUSE SYSTEM IN ENGLISH COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOLS.

Following these preliminary stages of general information gathering more specific data was sought. The instrument used for this was a questionnaire designed to discover two types of knowledge. The first involved not only demographic data but characteristics of house operation. The second dealt with some attitudes and opinions of the headmasters/mistresses on the house system.

The method of sampling will now be described. The "frame" used was a list of all the comprehensive schools in England and Wales issued in 1973.[19] Since only English schools were polled the total list was not made use of. This publication indicated the education authority in which the schools were located, the enrollment and whether the schools were co-ed or single sex.

A 12% sample was determined to be adequate and was selected on the following basis.

1. Stratified - The schools were categorized on the basis of whether they were mixed, boys or girls schools. Of the total comprehensive schools in England, 1638:

   141 (8.61%) were boys schools
   134 (8.18%) were girls schools
   1363 (83.21%) were mixed schools

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19 List of Comprehensive Schools For England and Wales - 1973, Department of Education and Science, London, 1973

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2. Proportionalized - A 12% sample of the stratification above would result in a total sample of 198 with 16 question forms sent to boys schools, 15 sent to girls schools and 167 to mixed schools.

3. Randomized - To insure a completely chance selection, all the schools listed in the frame for each category (boys, girls, mixed) were numbered. The actual choice was made using a table of random numbers.[20]

A list of schools to be polled was made up from the frame on the stratified, proportional and random manner noted above. 198 institutions were identified as possible recipients of the questionnaire Before the sample could be taken, however, the Chief Education Officer for each district in which a selected school was located, was required to give his permission for contact to be made. Since 77 education authorities were involved, letters were mailed to the chief officers requesting approval and including a copy of the questionnaire. Affirmative replies were received from the great majority as noted below:

Number of approvals requested = 77
Number of approvals granted = 65% (84.41%)
No reply or refusal = 12 (15.59%)

The geographic spread is indicated by the following two maps.

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20 G. W. Snedecor, Statistical Methods, 5th Ed. Table of Random Numbers, (Ames, Iowa, Iowa State College Press, 1956)

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County Education Authorities
Permission for Survey

City Borough Education Authorities

Permission for Survey

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Since some of the schools on the original sample could not be used because of the refusal of the Chief Education Officer from the district involved, the sample was modified. Instead of 198 questionnaires initially scheduled, 164 were mailed out thus changing the original sample from 12% to almost exactly 10% of the total universe. The following table will show comparisons between the first and second (actual) samples.

TABLE II

SAMPLE COMPARISON

SCHOOLS	ORIGINAL SAMPLE NUMBER	ORIGINAL SAMPLE PERCENT.	ACTUAL SAMPLE NUMBER	ACTUAL SAMPLE PERCENT	COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOLS IN ENGLAND NUMBER	COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOLS IN ENGLAND PERCENT
Mixed	165	83.33%	135	82.31%	1363	83.21%
Boys	17	8.59%	14	8.55%	141	8.61%
Girls	16	8.08%	15	9.14%	134	8.18%
Total	198		164		1638	

It can be seen that the actual sample corresponds very closely to both the original sample proportions and also to the universe of comprehensive schools.

The next table will indicate the nature of the return percentage received from the mailing.

TABLE III

SAMPLE-RETURN COMPARISON

SCHOOLS	ACTUAL SAMPLE NUMBER	ACTUAL SAMPLE PERCENT	RETURNED QUESTIONNAIRES NUMBER	RETURNED QUESTIONNAIRES PERCENT.
Mixed	135	82.31%	118	85.50%
BOYS	14	8.55%	10	7.25%
GIRLS	15	9.14%	10	7.25%
TOTAL	164		138	

The pattern of response percentage in the various categories is very similar not only to the sample, but to the universe. The total percentage of replies amounted to 83.13% which falls well within the limits allowing inference. The assumption can fairly be made, therefore, that what is true of the sample can be said also to represent an accurate reflection of the universe of comprehensive schools in England in the Spring of 1974 when the survey was made.

STEP V - QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEY ON ATTITUDES OF PUPILS IN COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOLS TOWARD THE HOUSE SYSTEM.

In order to supply an essential dimension to the picture of the house system in comprehensive schools, the feelings and conceptions of students were solicited. Because of the importance of the personal element in any house, no matter how well organized or how elaborate the physical facilities, the whole operation could break down through lack of human involvement. As a consequence, the issue was taken directly to those concerned and pupil attitudes measured.

A questionnaire was constructed and tested with students. A sample was chosen by writing to those headmasters/mistresses who completed the original questionnaire and had a house system in their schools. They were picked at random with no effort to select those with extensive house operations only.

A sample of 500 was decided upon as one which would provide a valid insight on student thinking on houses. In the cover letter the heads were asked to select a representative group of their pupils. Thirteen school officials were approached with this request and ten agreed to cooperate. The plan was to send 50 questionnaires to each head to be distributed to pupils from all form levels and a variety of social and academic backgrounds. Nine headmasters/mistresses followed through and 455 student responses were received. Every form is represented in the returns by at least 10% of the total. Whether or not this is an actual reflection of the real proportions in each form of comprehensive schools is unknown to the writer. The one disappointment in the returns lay in the fact that no response was received from a girls school. Even with this caveat in mind it appears that a good deal of reliance can be placed in the data as giving a reasonably accurate reflection of pupil attitudes toward the house system in their schools.

The writer has tried to show in this chapter that care was exercized in the design of the study, the construction of the questionnaires and the sampling techniques used so that reliance can be placed on the information presented in the next chapter.

CHAPTER VI

RESULTS OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE SURVEYS

In this chapter what has been learned from the responses will be reported. The answers on each completed form were transferred to punch cards and the data tabulated. To make the information gathered more easily understandable it will be presented in two parts.

Part I - Replies from school administrators about the characteristics and activities of their house systems, will be given together with a compilation of their attitudes toward various aspects of the system.

Part II - Responses by pupils in comprehensive schools will be presented, dealing primarily with their feelings concerning the house system as they have experienced it.

Each of these two sections will be handled as follows:

1. The questions will be listed as printed on the questionnaire with group totals reported in tables below each item.

2. A summary of the replies will be made with interpretation if needed.

For the most part the meaning is obvious and the answers are clear and straightforward.

PART I

RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS ON HOUSE SYSTEM IN COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOLS

TABLE IV

1. In which county, borough or other education authority is your school located?

CITY BOROUGHS

Barking (London) - 1
Barnet (London) - 2
Barnsley - 1
Birkenhead - 1
Birmingham - 1
Bootle - 1
Bradford - 4
Bristol - 4
Coventry - 1
Croydon (London) - 2
Darlington - 1
Doncaster - 1
Ealing (London) - 1
Enfield (London) - 1
Exeter - 2
Gateshead - 1
Haringey (London) - 1
Hillingdon (London) - 2
Kingston - Upon - Hull - 2
Leeds - 3
Liverpool - 3
Luton - 1
Manchester - 5
Merton (London) - 1
Newham (London) - 1
Norwich - 2
Redbridge (London) - 1Rochdale - 2
Sheffield - 3
Southampton - 1
Stoke - On - Trent - 2
Teesside - 1
Waltham Forest (London) - 4
West Bromwich - 2
Wigan - 3

TOTAL 165

COUNTY BOROUGHS

Berkshire - 3
Cornwall - 1
Cumberland - 3
Derbyshire - 6
Devon - 1
Dorset - 1
Essex - 6
Glouscester - 3
Hampshire - 3
Hereford - 2
Hertford - 9
Huntington and Peterborough - 1
Kent - 2
Lancashire - 7
Leicestershire - 4
Lincoln (Lindsey) - 3
Northamptonshire - 1
Northumberland - 1
Nottinghamshire - 1
Oxfordshire - 2
Shropshire - 1
Somerset - 3
Suffolk (East) - 1
Suffolk (West) - 1
Sussex (West) - 1
Warwickshire - 2
Yorkshire (East) - 1
Yorkshire (North) - 1
Yorkshire (West) - 1

TOTAL 72

NO ANSWER - 1

GRAND TOTAL 138

TABLE V

2. Is your school a mixed, boys or girls school?

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Mixed School	118	85.507
Boys School	10	7.246
Girls School	10	7.246

TABLE VI

3. What is the enrollment of your school?

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
500 or under	9	6.521
501 - 1000	62	44.927
1001 or over	67	48.550

TABLE VII

4. Do you have a house system in your school?

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Yes	82	59.420
No	56	40.579

TABLE VIII

5. Are there other types of organization in your school?

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
No	23	28.048
Year System	25	30.487
Lower-middle-upper School	17	20.731
Other	14	17.073
No Answer	3	3.658

TABLE IX

6. What is the approximate size of the houses in your school?

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Under 100	2	2.439
101 - 150	14	17.073
151 - 200	23	28.048
201 - 250	15	18.292
251 - 300	15	18.292
301 - 350	9	10.975
351 - 400	2	2.439
401 - 500	1	1.219
Above 500	0	0

TABLE X

7. What facilities do houses have separately for their own operation?

MORE THAN ONE ANSWER RECORDED IF APPLICABLE

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Common Room	14	17.073
Dining Room	20	24.390
Assembly Room	25	30.487
Locker Space	16	19.512
Housemasters Office	39	47.560
Other facilities	13	15.853
None	22	26.829

TABLE XI

8. Is your school "purpose built" for the house system?

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Yes	12	14.634
No	68	82.926
No Answer	2	2.439

TABLE XII

9. Do housemasters/mistresses receive a reduction in teaching load?

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Yes	46	56.097
No	31	37.804
No Answer	5	6.097

TABLE XIII

10. If "yes", how much of a reduction (approximately)?

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
5%	3	6.521
10%	13	28.260
15%	13	28.260
20%	3	6.521
25%	3	6.521
30%	4	8.695
35%	6	13.043
No Answer	1	2.173

TABLE XIV

11. Do housemasters/mistresses receive additional pay?

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Yes	46	56.097
No	31	37.804
No Answer	5	6.097

TABLE XV

12. If "yes" approximately how much additional pay?

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
5%	4	8.695
10%	4	8.695
15%	1	2.173
20%	4	8.695
25%	7	15.217
30%	15	32.608
N.A.	11	23.913

TABLE XVI

13. Which of the following activities do the houses in your school engage in?

MORE THAN ONE ANSWER RECORDED IF APPLICABLE

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Taking school attendance	44	53.658
Keeping routine pupil information	44	53.658
House assemblies	64	78.048
Sports activities	75	91.463
Tutor group social activities	30	36.585
House social activities	45	54.878
Formal teaching of required subjects	12	14.634
Informal academic tutoring	14	17.073
Pupil counseling	42	51.219
Parent conferences	34	41.463
Others	18	21.951

TABLE XVII

14. What are the duties of the housemasters/mistresses in your school?

MORE THAN ONE ANSWER RECORDED IF APPLICABLE

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Discipline of students in his/her house	49	59.756
Oversight of pupil records & files	45	54.878
Dissemination of information to students	44	53.658
Relationship (interviews & counsels) with parents	43	52.439
Counsels students	40	48.780
Trains house tutors	36	43.902
Oversees planning for house social activities	51	62.195
Refers pupils to social service personnel outside school when needed (psychologist-social worker)	36	43.902
Other	30	36.585

TABLE XVIII

15. Does your school have prefects or house captains?

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Yes	58	70.731
No	20	24.390
No Answer	4	4.878

TABLE XIX

16. If "yes" are the prefects or house captains chosen from 6th Form, 5th Form or both?

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
6th Form only	13	22.413
5th Form only	18	31.034
Both 5th & 6th Form	19	32.777
Other	8	13.793

TABLE XX

17. In your school are there any groups which are NOT included in regular multi age houses?

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Yes	13	15.853
No	65	79.268
No Answer	4	4.878

TABLE XXI

18. If "yes" do any of the following groups have special houses?

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
1st Form	3	23.076
2nd Form	2	15.884
1st & 2nd Forms together	1	7.692
6th Form	7	53.846

TABLE XXII

19. Are house tutors assigned to a group entering the school and do they follow them through until they leave school?

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Yes	33	40.243
No	28	34.146
Other plan	13	15.853
No Answer	8	9.756

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TABLE XXIII

20. If there is a "personality clash" of serious proportions between a pupil and a housemaster/mistress, is it possible for a pupil to be changed from one house to another?

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Yes	57	69.512
No	14	17.073
Other plan	4	4.878
No Answer	7	8.536

TABLE XXIV

21. Does the same hold true for pupils in tutor groups - can they be changed from one to another for "personality clashes"?

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Yes	58	70.731
No	8	9.756
Other plan	2	2.439
No Answer	14	17.073

TABLE XXV

22. Does the house system in your school use a system of competition among houses?

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Yes	76	92.682
No	4	4.878
No Answer	2	2.439

TABLE XXVI

23. If "yes" what types of competition are involved?

MORE THAN ONE ANSWER RECORDED IF APPLICABLE

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Academic	30	36.585
Sports	75	91.463
Social behavior (in school)	17	20.731
Help to the community	14	17.073
Other	17	20.731

TABLE XXVII

24. Is there competition among individuals in the school for merit points as well as for house points?

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Yes	18	21.951
No	62	75.609
Other	0	0
No Answer	2	2.439

TABLE XXVIII

25. Are demerits given for unusually poor work or anti-social behavior?

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Yes	15	18.292
No	62	75.609
Other	2	2.439
No Answer	3	3.658

TABLE XXIX

26. The house system in your school could be considered in which of the following catagories?

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
STRONG (Many social, sports, academic and counseling activities with an active, interested and able house staff)	34	41.463
AVERAGE (Some guidance, social and sports activities with a variety of interest and ability toward house activities among house staff	20	24.390
WEAK (Used mainly as an attendance checking and information disseminating device organized activities confined mainly to games	22	26.829
No Answer	6	7.317

TABLE XXX

27. Do you feel the house system is a valuable device for pastoral care if given enough time and space for its activities?

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Yes	63	76.829
No	11	13.414
No Answer	8	9.756

TABLE XXXI

28. Do you feel that other ways of organizing a comprehensive school have more value than the house system?

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Yes	28	34.146
No	37	45.121
No Answer	17	20.731

TABLE XXXII

29. If "yes" which of the following do you favor?

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Year system	22	26.829
Lower-middle-upper school	7	8.536
Other	2	2.439
No answer	51	62.195

TABLE XXXIII

30. Which of the following "weaknesses" ascribed to the house system in educational literature do you feel are serious?

MORE THAN ONE ANSWER RECORDED IF APPLICABLE

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
It fosters too much of a competitive spirit in the pupils of the school	8	9.756
It tends to put house loyalty before school loyalty	7	8.536
Only a few pupils have the opportunity for leadership roles in the house	6	7.317
Nearly all leadership roles are given to older students (5th and 6th form)	13	15.853
Not enough time is given from teaching duties for a housemaster/mistress and house tutors, to do a good job.	43	52.439
In schools NOT purpose built for houses the system functions poorly because of lack of space for house operations.	57	69.512
There are not enough trained, experienced and interested people to act as housemasters/mistresses and house tutors.	16	19.512
The house system is an artificial importation from private grammar schools which is alien to comprehensive education.	8	9.756
Since the 1st formers are usually bewildered and lost and the 6th formers are often blase' and uninterested in house matters, the house really consists of only 4 year levels (2-5 forms).	13	15.853
In the minds of many pupils the house system is associated with discipline and therefore the pastoral counseling aspect is difficult to encourage.	10	12.195
Other	3	3.658

TABLE XXXIV

31. Which of the following "strengths" ascribed to the house system in educational literature do you feel are especially noteworthy?

MORE THAN ONE ANSWER RECORDED IF APPLICABLE

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
It provides an opportunity for students to be put in leadership as officers of houses	28	34.146
It encourages motivation among pupils who can strive not only for personal achievement but for the advancement of the house as well	31	37.804
It provides a wide opportunity for social contact among pupils of varying ages.	42	51.219
It insures that at least one person in school (tutor) will know the pupil and will care about his/her problems and progress.	49	59.756
It provides a "home base" within a larger school where the pupil feels known and secure.	42	51.219
The tutor can act as a "friend in court" for a pupil who gets into trouble with school officials or civic authorities.	32	39.024
It offers a chance to participate in group roles, whether on house committees or house athletic teams which might not be available to as many pupils on a school-wide basis.	46	56.097
It insures that at least two people - housemaster and tutor will work to help the pupil solve problems which hinder his/her full development.	44	53.658
There is a continuity of counseling and expanded opportunity to know students well when the tutor follows a group through for several years.	38	46.341
Because pupils feel they are known by housemasters/mistresses and house tutors there is more effective control of pupils.	31	37.804

TABLE XXXIV, CONT.

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
If there is streaming in the school the house system with its mixed ability base, may provide the only opportunity for children to meet others of varying social backgrounds and academic aptitudes	33	40.243
Other	4	4.878

TABLE XXXV

32. From your experience with it, what is your immediate reaction when "house system" is mentioned?

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Highly favorable	27	32.926
Favorable	30	36.585
Uncertain	14	17.073
Unfavorable	4	4.878
Highly unfavorable	0	0
Other	1	1.219
No Answer	6	7.317

TABLE XXXVI

33. Would you be in favor of keeping the house system in comprehensive schools based on your own experience with it?

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Yes	64	78.048
No	7	8.536
Other	4	4.878
No Answer	7	8.536

TABLE XXXVII

34. Position of person completing this form

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Headmaster/mistress	95	68.840
Assistant Headmaster/mistress	12	8.695
Housemaster/mistress	4	2.898
Assistant Housemaster/mistress	0	0
House tutor	1	.724
No Answer	26	18.840

SUMMARY OF REPLIES

What can be induced from this data on the house system as it exists in English comprehensive schools? The following statements are supported by the information shown in the preceeding pages.

1. There is a house system of one type of another in the majority of comprehensive schools. (59 + %)

2. It is often supplemented by or combined with other kinds of pastoral care structures, notably the year (30 + %) or school system. (20 + %)

3. Houses vary considerably in size from less than 100 pupils to over 400, but nearly all (93 + %) fall between 100 and 350 and almost two thirds (63 + %) contain 250 or fewer.

4. Most schools were not built with the house system in mind and, aside from the housemasters office (47 +%), a sizeable majority (69 +%) are not operating with much in the way of special house facilities.

5. Housemasters/mistresses commonly (56 + %) teach lighter loads.

6. They are also likely to receive additional salary (56 + %)

7. House responsibilities include many duties from dealing with administrative details such as taking attendance (53 + %) and keeping routine pupil information (53 + %) to pastoral care involving pupil counsel (51 + %) and parent conferences (41 + %). The most commonly found house functions and sports (91 + %), house assemblies (78 + %) and social activities. (90 + % including both tutor and house social functions).

8. Houses generally operate with prefects or house captains (70 + %) who are chosen from either 5th or 6th Form (32 + %) or 5th Form only (31 + %).

9. In most schools the houses include all ages within the school (79 + %) with a few systems which separate 6th and/or 1st Forms into their own houses.

10. Pupils may usually be changed to another group if a serious "personality clash" occurs with the housemaster/mistress (69 + %) or the tutor (70 + %).

11. Competition among houses is nearly a universal feature (92 + %) with sports constituting the most common type (91 + %) and academic competition found in only about a third (36 + %) of these schools.

12. Individual competition among pupils for merit or house points is not widespread. (21 + %)

13. The house system in most schools is characterized as either "strong and active" (41 + %) or "average" (24 + %) with only a minority (26 + %) rated as "weak".

14. Close to a majority of the respondents using the house system (45 + %) feel it is the most effective way of organizing their schools while a third (34 + %) believe other approaches have more value.

15. Two serious weaknesses are identified as lack of time from other duties for housemasters/mistresses to enable them to do a good job (52 + %) and poor facilities in schools not purpose built for the house system (69 + %)

16. Many of the generally acknowledged strengths of the house system are endorsed by those completing the questionnaire with the most popular being the pastoral relationship between the individual pupil and the house tutor (59 + %) and the opportunity for wide participation in group roles for pupils possible in the house setting.

17. Most respondents with a house system have positive reactions to it, either "highly favorable" (32 + %) or "favorable" (36 + %) with only a few being "unfavorable" (4 + %) or "uncertain". (17 + %)

18. The overwhelming majority (78 + %) favor keeping the house system based on their experience with it while only a small group (8 + %) feel it should be abandoned.

19. Two thirds of those completing the questionnaire identified themselves as headmasters/mistresses (68 + %)

In conclusion it appears that the house system is alive and reasonably well in the majority of comprehensive schools. The feelings of the 40 + % of school authorities without house systems are not included in this report -- because it was felt that those now using the system would be in the best position to make judgments about it. Many comments were written by the respondents and from them and the answers to the items reviewed above it is clear that the house system, despite problems, is functioning in a manner which is satisfactory to those responsible for its oepration.

PART II

PUPIL RESPONSES TO QUESTIONS ON THE HOUSE SYSTEM IN COMPREHENSIVE SCHOOLS

TABLE XXXVIII

1. In what form are you presently?

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
1st	48	10.549
2nd	47	10.329
3rd	107	23.516
4th	98	21.384
5th	93	20.439
6th	48	10.549
No answer	14	3.076

TABLE XXXIX

2. What is your sex?

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Female	193	42.417
Male	248	54.505
No Answer	14	3.076

TABLE XL

3. What type of comprehensive school do you attend?

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Boys	46	10.989
Girls	0	0
Mixed	395	86.813
No Answer	14	3.076

TABLE XLI

4. Do you hold any office in the school?

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Yes	54	11.861
No	386	84.835
No Answer	15	3.296

TABLE XLII

5. If "yes" what is the office?

"Main Office" - 2

Inquiries - 2

Secretary - 3

School Council - 2

Librarian - 3

Prefect - 22

Box Office - 1

House Captain - 5

Games Captain - 4

Student Representative - 1
Board of Governors)

Miscellaneous - 3

TABLE XLIII

6. Do you hold any office in your house?

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Yes	65	14.285
No	368	80.879
No Answer	22	4.835

TABLE XLIV

7. If "yes" what is the office?

Games Captain - 20

House Secretary - 5

Prefect - 17

Vice Captain - 1

House Captain - 4

Head Boy - 1

House Sports Official - 1

Run Tuck Shop - 1

Washing Pots - 1
("an office is an office!")

House Committee - 6

Miscellaneous - 1

TABLE XLV

8. What activities do you participate in through your house?

More than one answer recorded if applicable

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Games	305	67.032
Academic Competition among Houses	103	22.637
Social Activities	99	21.758
Community Service Activities	75	16.483
Other	73	16.043
None (or NA)	53	11.648

TABLE XLVI

9. Do you feel your house master/mistress knows you reasonably well?

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Yes	273	60.000
No	63	13.846
Don't know	98	21.538
No Answer	22	4.835

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TABLE XLVII

10. Do you feel your house tutor knows you reasonably well?

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Yes	327	71.868
No	39	8.571
Don't know	61	13.406
No Answer	28	6.153

TABLE XLVIII

11. What are your feelings toward your housemaster/mistress?

More than one answer recorded if applicable

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
He/she likes me	76	16.703
I like him/her	189	41.538
I respect him/her	231	50.769
I am afraid of him/her	14	3.076
He/she has my best interests at heart	108	23.736
His/her main duty is to discipline those in his/her house	127	27.912
He/she is too busy with other duties to have enough time for house activity	30	6.593
Other	18	3.956

XLVIV

12. What are your feelings toward the activities carried on by your house?

MORE THAN ONE ANSWER RECORDED IF APPLICABLE

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
They are interesting	188	41.318

TABLE XLVIV (CONT.)

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
There is plenty of variety in activities	190	41.758
Competition among houses through games is worthwhile	206	45.274
Competition among houses through academic activities is worthwhile	63	13.846
Only a few have a chance to participate in house activities	61	13.406
Only a few have a chance to be leaders	88	19.340
Other	15	3.296

TABLE L

13. What are your feelings about the pastoral care of your house?

MORE THAN ONE ANSWER RECORDED IF APPLICABLE

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
I take school problems to the housemasters/mistress or house tutor	145	31.868
I receive helpful advice on school problems.	154	33.846
I take personal problems to the housemaster/mistress or house tutor	29	6.373
I receive helpful advice on personal problems	49	10.769
The discipline given by the housemaster/mistress keeps me from going to him/her with my problems	74	16.263
Other	43	9.450

TABLE LI

14. What is your feeling toward other pupils in your house?

MORE THAN ONE ANSWER RECORDED IF APPLICABLE

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Generally I like them	284	62.417
I feel a loyalty to them as members of my house	49	10.769
I feel the older pupils run the house without much thought for younger ones.	70	15.384
I feel a small select group of pupils run the house without much influence from the rest of the house.	33	7.252
I get along with those my own age but don't do much with those older or younger than myself.	118	25.934
Other	15	3.296

TABLE LII

15. Do you wish you could change from the house you are now in to another house?

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Yes	42	9.230
No	374	82.197
Other	16	3.516
No Answer	23	5.054

TABLE LIII

16. If "yes" why do you want to change?

MORE THAN ONE ANSWER RECORDED IF APPLICABLE

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
I don't like others in the house	4	.879
My friends are in another house	26	5.714
I don't like my housemaster/mistress	6	1.318
I don't like my house tutor	1	.132
Other houses have more interesting activities	8	1.758
Other	6	1.318

TABLE LIV

17. Does your house have a regular headquarters with common room and/or dining hall?

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Yes	250	54.945
No	166	36.483
Other	15	3.296
No Answer	24	5.274

TABLE LV

18. If it does not have these house rooms - do you feel this hurts the house operation?

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Yes	99	21.758
No	136	29.890
No Answer	220	48.351

TABLE LVI

19. What is your feeling about the size of your house?

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Too big	41	9.010
Too small	45	9.890
About right	343	75.384
No Answer	26	5.714

TABLE LVII

20. Do you feel your house tutor should have had you in class to really know you well?

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Yes	146	32.087
No	73	16.043
Doesn't make any difference	203	44.615
No Answer	33	7.252

TABLE LVIII

21. What is your feeling toward your house?

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Great loyalty	106	23.296
Some loyalty	251	55.164
Little loyalty	65	14.285
No Answer	33	7.252

TABLE LIX

22. What is your feeling toward awarding "house points" for individual academic excellence?

MORE THAN ONE ANSWER RECORDED IF APPLICABLE

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Good idea	209	45.934
Bad idea	64	14.065
Good and bad points about balance	47	10.329
It encourages me to work harder	172	37.802
It does not affect my effort in school at all	115	25.274

TABLE LX

23. If you had the chance to "keep", "modify" or "do away" with the house system what would be your decision?

	NUMBER	PERCENTAGE
Keep it as it is	316	69.450
Modify it considerably	63	13.846
Do away with it	39	8.571
No Answer	37	8.131

TABLE LXI

24. If you answered "modify it", in the previous question how would you like it changed?

More activities during dinner hour - 2

More widespread participation in house operation - for all students - 6

Houses smaller in size - 8

Do away with house assemblies - 1

Houses larger - 6

Change house tutors frequently - 1

Have houses be for one year students only - 2

Teachers be more strict - 1

Younger pupils should have more say in house activities - 3

Building facilities for house activities should be larger - 4

Greater variety of house activities - 10

Reduce isolation from rest of school - 2

Made more personal - 1

Choose your own house rather than be assigned to one - 1

More autonomy for houses - 1

Suggestion box - 1

More non-athletic activities - 2

Athletics for the non-skilled - 1

Closer contact with pupils by housemasters - 2

Abolish it for 6th Form - keep it for rest of school - 1

Emphasis on competition reduced - 1

"House system is a manifistation of the egotistic aim of the capitolist society"- 1

SUMMARY OF REPLIES

What are pupil attitudes toward the house system as they experience it through attendance in a comprehensive school? The preceeding tables have included many details of student feelings. In this section, therefore, only a brief summary of the highlights will be undertaken.

1. Replies were received from a cross-section of the student bodies of the schools. Respondents are spread over all forms with no level represented by less than 10% of the total group.

2. The percentage split between boys and girls answering the questions show what might reasonably be expected to represent a close-to-average division of the total school population (42 + % girls and 54 + % boys)

3. The pupil respondents came from boys schools (10 + %) and mixed schools (86 + %) with non replying from girls schools. While no conclusions will be drawn about girls schools the fact that 193 girls in mixed schools did complete the form indicates that female point of view is represented in these results.

4. Only a small percentage of pupils responding held offices in the school at large. It is clear that the replies are not biased by an undue loading with school leaders.

5. The same statement can be made about house officers since only 14 + % were involved in this manner.

6. By far the most popular activity sponsored through the house system was games (67 + %) followed at a distance by academic competition (22 + %) and social activities. (21 + %) Only 11 + % either engaged in no activities or did not answer the items.

7. Most students (60%) felt their housemaster/mistress knew them "reasonably well" while 21 + % were not sure about the matter. Only 13 + % believed their housemaster/mistress did not know them.

8. An even greater percentage (71 + %) thought their house tutors knew them "reasonably well". A small group (8 + %) felt they were not known by tutors and 13 + % were again not sure.

9. Pupil feelings toward housemasters/mistresses varied but in general were far more positive than negative. Half

9. cont.
(50 + %) of the pupils "respected" their house leaders and 41 + % "liked" them. Only 23 + % however, were convinced that housemasters/mistresses had their "best interests at heart". Hardly any (3 + %) indicated they were afraid of the house leader.

10. Attitudes expressed by pupils about house activities, while positive, were not in the order of overwhelming approval. 41 + % believed that they were "interesting and varied" while 45 + % endorsed games competition among houses. Only a few (13 + %) felt that house activities were available to just a small number of students or that leadership opportunities were restricted. (19 + %)

11. A rather surprising reaction was received concerning the pastoral care aspect of house operation. Less than one third of the pupils (31 + %) took school problems to housemaster/mistress or tutor. About the same number (33 + %) felt they were given helpful advice on educational matters. Most students (93 + %) did not discuss personal problems with housemasters/mistresses or tutors.

12. Most respondents indicated reasonable satisfaction with their house situation. They generally liked the other pupils in their house. The great majority (82 + %) did not want to change to another house.

13. A large percentage (75 + %) held the opinion that their house was about the right size.

14. The pupils, for the most part, felt that it was <u>not</u> necessary for house tutors to teach them in formal classes to know them well; 44 + % were convinced that it made no difference or (16 + %) that it need not be a requirement.

15. The amount of devotion generated toward the house was positive in nature (78 + % overall) with 23 + % holding "great loyalty" and 55 + % "some loyalty".

16. Nearly half (45 + %) endorsed the concept of awarding house points for individual academic effort while only a small number (14 + %) felt it was a bad idea.

17. More than two thirds of the responding students (69 + %) would keep their houses as they are with a few (13 + %) wishing to modify them and even less (8 + %) expressing the desire to do away with the system entirely.

The preceeding information indicates that pupils typically carry a positive attitude about most aspects of the house system. The majority

take part in some activities, feel their housemaster/mistress and tutors know them and often like or respect these leaders. Pastoral care, on the academic level however, has not greatly impressed students and has even less impact in matters involving personal problems. Despite this they like other young people in their houses, do not want to change to another house, feel loyalty to it, and would not modify much in its operation.

CHAPTER XII

SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

The comprehensive secondary school as conceived of in both England and the United States is designed to provide education for all the children of all the people in any school district. In practice, because of economic and educational reasons many such institutions are large, frequently enrolling more than 1000 students. Such mass education is likely to result in a loss of attention to personal needs and individual problems. Thus the gains achieved by setting up these large and varied educational organizations with superior facilities may very well be counterbalanced through the loss of student identity in a large mass of youngsters.

The thesis of this paper is that the problem outlined here is particularly severe in most sizeable American junior and senior high schools and that the house system as operated in many English comprehensive schools offers a potential solution which can be adapted to American conditions.

To begin this monograph a brief historic survey of the house system pointed to its ancient origin in privately maintained schools, its continued use later in publicly supported institutions and finally its adoption in comprehensive schools after World War II. The features which have characterized the house system over many years have remained fairly constant though often modified to fit changing conditions. Common to most systems are the following:

1. Division of students in a large school into smaller component groups.
2. An overall adult leader appointed from the school staff

as housemaster/mistress responsible for house operation.

3. Separation of the house into sections each under the direction of a teacher as house tutor.

4. Competition among houses in varying areas, commonly games and academic achievement.

5. Counseling of individual students on educational and personal matters by housemasters/mistresses and tutors.

6. Provision of a home base for each student where he/she is known and cared about.

7. Use of older, responsible pupils as prefects to assist adult leaders in house functions.

At the present time the type of pastoral care provided in English comprehensive shcools is a matter of controversy. Opinion differs on whether the house system is more effective than the "school" or "year" approach or a combination of several types of organization. There is no question, however, about the need for some system of caring for individual needs in the schools. The method employed is often determined by the feelings of the headmaster/mistress, and the type of building and facilities available.

Since 1965 several general studies of comprehensive education have included data on the house system. The results appear contradictory in some ways as pointed out in Chapter II. The writer believes that much of this discrepancy is caused by the dynamic quality of comprehensive education. Many such schools have been built in recent years with innovation as a keynote of their operation. Because of this it would appear that the most accurate assessment of the situation would tend to be the one made most recently. For this reason, and also because of the care which went into the sampling of this survey, as

well as the high percentage of response received, it can be said with confidence that what is true of the sample presents a reasonably accurate reflection of many aspects of the house system in English comprehensive schools.

The issue of whether or not a school needs to be purpose built for house operation to be successful is still a controversial matter. The great majority (82 + %) of schools in the survey which had houses were not purpose built for the function. Despite this the respondents classified their house system as either "strong" (41 + %) or "average". (24 + %) On the other hand they expressed the opinion that schools not purpose built for the house system were seriously weakened because of this lack. (69 + %) It appears that houses can function successfully without extensive facilities but that their operation could be improved considerably with more space.

House activities can be varied and while some, such as sports and assemblies, were very common others involving pupil counseling and social functions were found in only half the schools as part of house function. This pastoral care aspect does not constitute as important a part of the work of the house as is often imagined.

Much of what has been assumed to be true of the house from experience and past investigations has been shown to reflect the actual situation. A general feeling of satisfaction and often enthusiasm for the system was discovered among administrators and students whose schools had houses. Despite this the writer received the distinct impression that the potential of the system has not, in many cases, been

used to the maximum effect.

This should not deter American educators from considering a program for dividing large secondary schools into smaller component parts similar to the house system. The values to be gained from such a more, i.e., providing more leadership experience for students, giving pupils a feeling of "belonging" in a school, encouraging a close relationship to a caring adult with the attendant possibilities for guidance and counseling throughout his/her academic career and the opportunity to take part in social activities with small groups, and all so manifestly great as to require serious attention by leaders in American secondary education.

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APPENDIX

Comments by Respondents

"Pro" House System

"Contra" House System

About House System

Cover Letter to Housemasters/Mistresses

Questionnaire on House System

Pupil Questionnaire on House System

Comments "Pro" the House System

From the headmaster - large mixed comprehensive school:

"The house system within this school is confined to competitive events with pastoral care being done basically on a year basis. Within these limitations it is tremendously successful in providing leadership and organizational opportunities for pupils of all ages and in providing competition for pupils below school standard. It is also an excellent way of fostering pupil-staff relationships."

From the headmaster - medium sized mixed comprehensive school:

"The house system is an essential part of the organization of an 11 - 16 comprehensive school."

From the headmaster - medium sized, mixed comprehensive school:

"Some division of schools over 600 into smaller units is essential - the all-knowing, all-commanding, all-comforting Head is not viable in large schools. The upper-middle-lower structure is probably necessary at the 1200+ level, but for the 600 - 900 range, I think the house system, with the mixing of ages and abilities and the propagation of a simple corporate identity is infinitely superior to the 'year' system, which I find sterile and lacking in continuity."

From the Headmaster - large, mixed comprehensive school:

"The house gives continuity of contact with parents which the year system lacks."

From the Headmaster - medium sized, mixed comprehensive school:

"From personal experience, it enables all staff to feel involved in the total work of the school. This tends to lead to a far greater sense of responsibility and cohesion than with other systems.

It should be emphasized that careful oversight of house tutorial staff is essential, to see that all aspects of the work of tutors is being maintained."

From the Headmaster - large, mixed comprehensive school:

"Its (house system) strnegth lies in the community of care it can provide, which is why my housemasters are deeply involved in vocational and educational guidance as well as personal counseling."

From the Headmaster - medium sized, mixed comprehensive school:

"I am convinced that at the grass roots a house system is marginally better than a year system. I think there is more scope on the staff side working within a house system. The staffing ratio within the schools is the critical factor whatever system of pastoral care is chosen."

From the Headmaster - large, mixed comprehensive school:

"It (house system) gives the virtues of a small school with the resources of a large one."

From the Headmaster - large mixed comprehensive school:

"An essential aspect of the life of this school."

From the Headmaster - large, mixed comprehensive school:

"The advantages here have far outweighed any possible disadvantages."

From the Headmaster - large, mixed comprehensive school:

"It (house system) is at the heart of the school's organization. gathering together all the influences which work upon a child, combating what is bad and helping him absorb what is good."

From the Headmaster - large, mixed comprehensive school:

"A house system in some form is an essential in a large school if every child is to fulfill his/her potencial."

COMMENTS "CONTRA" THE HOUSE SYSTEM

From the Headmistress - medium sized, girls comprehensive school:

"The essential factor in a large comprehensive (school) is that each child should feel he/she 'belongs' to a small group. I favor the year system because:

1. Each group will be facing the same school problems at the same time and teachers can concentrate on those problems.
2. The juniors can take office within their group.
3. There should be more security for shy girls if they are with their contemporaries."

From the Headmaster - medium sized, mixed comprehensive school:

"The role conflict between house-staff and subject-staff is always a potential difficulty."

From the Headmaster - medium sized mixed comprehensive school:

"A house system inevitably has a competitive element not suitable to a pastoral unit."

From the Headmistress - medium sized, mixed comprehensive school:

"Unless the school is purpose-built, the house system is an imposition. Horizontal organization is logical and rational; it has most of the advantages of the house system and few of its disadvantages."

From the Headmaster - medium sized, mixed comprehensive school:

"Suffers from the weakness that it is difficult, except in the largest schools, to link a house system with the curriculum and teaching organization."

From the Headmaster - large, mixed comprehensive school:

"I prefer NOT to have the house system:

(a) Because it is difficult to find 8 or more Heads of Houses of real calibre. With 3 Heads of Schools, able men and women are easier to find.

(b) Administration, and in some ways pastoral care, tend to be fragmented in the house system."

From the Headmaster - large, mixed comprehensive school:

"For the past two years we have run on the year system because I felt the house system had the basic limitation that teaching groups and administration groups were not identical."

COMMENTS "ABOUT" THE HOUSE SYSTEM

From the Headmaster - large, mixed comprehensive school:

"Provision of suitable buildings, to give House Area with Assembly Hall, Dining Area, Social Area, Staff Rooms and Registration Points, is essential to full development."

From the Headmaster - small, mixed comprehensive school·

"I have indicated that I am very much in favor of the house system; BUT it requires time - for both tutors and housemasters - not easily available when staff is limited. It also demands acceptance by staff-tutors and housemasters must work together and trust each other. In particular, there is real danger of a clash between the duties and status of Heads of Academic Departments and Housemasters. Both must be seen by all (staff and pupils) to have an equally responsible position in the school."

From the Headmaster - large, mixed comprehensive school:

"The house system, as with any system of pastoral care, depends upon the enthusiasm, calibre and dedication of the staff concerned."

From the Headmaster - medium sized mixed comprehensive school:

"Any system or procedure which helps make it evident to a pupil that he/she belongs to a "caring community" is important."

From the Headmaster - medium sized, mixed comprehensive school:

"The school buildings must be suitable to enable each house to have a geographical location within the school. Otherwise, your house system is very artificial and never really means much to pupils. If you have a house system, then you must have the "whole" system and nothing but the house system."

From the Headmistress - medium sized, girls (London) comprehensive school:

"We find that a combination of the year and house systems gives us the best of both worlds. We use the year system for all pastoral care and discipline and the house system for everything competitive, e.g. sports, music and drama festivals, etc.

From the Headmaster - medium sized, mixed comprehensive school:

"If (it is) the basis of school organization and total thinking, it will probably be off to a good start. If its role is limited viz. pastoral only, diffusion and confusion may well prevail, not least among staff with dual role, i.e. academic and house."

From the Headmaster - medium sized, mixed comprehensive school:

"It (house system) is a useful device for dividing a large school for social and pastoral purposes when one has divided the children into "streams" or "bands" for teaching purposes. In this way, house tutors can be given social groups of mixed ability.

If a school is not "streamed" or "banded" then the tutor groups are mixed ability and it is possible to operate a horizontal system, i.e. year system or Upper/Lower School. Horizontal systems are more workable day by day."

I am seeking your help in a study of the house system in the comprehensive schools of England. As a part of this study a survey sample of 10% of the comprehensive schools has been selected on a random, stratified and proportional basis. Your school has been chosen and a questionnaire - opinionnaire is enclosed with the hope you will fill it in or ask someone on your staff to do it. A stamped, addressed envelope is enclosed to facilitate an easy return.

In explanation of this request let me provide some background. I am an American engaged in teacher education and am currently on Sabbatical leave. My interest in the house system arises from the need in large American secondary schools to do more to personalize education for each pupil. Our school counsellors often know only the top students, or those who are most troublesome while the greatmass in between remain rather anonymous. I believe the house system has elements which could be adapted into many American schools to help solve the problem mentioned above.

Permission to contact you has been given by the Chief Education Officer of your area.

Knowing of the many calls on your time any help with this survey is most gratefully appreciated.

Very truly yours,

American address:
R.B. Dierenfield Ed.D
Professor of Education
Macalester College
St. Paul, Minnesota 55105
U.S.A.

Please reply to
English address:
Dr. R.B. Dierenfield
109 Elgin Crescent
Kensington
London, W.11.

Questionnaire on House System

In Comprehensive Schools

This questionnaire is devised to gather information about house systems in English comprehensive schools. The ultimate aim is to discover those elements and functions which might be applied to large American secondary schools to help make education there more personalized and individualized. In any published report of the findings no mention will be made of particular schools or education authorities. Your willingness to take time to complete this questionnaire is **greatly appreciated!** A stamped, addressed envelope is enclosed for easy return.

Please put the letter of the correct answer by the space near the number of the question. (This will facilitate placing the information on punch cards).

1. In which county, borough or other education authority is your school located?

_____

_____ 2. Is your school a:

(A) Mixed school
(B) Boys school
(C) Girls school

_____ 3. What is the enrollment of your school?

(A) 500 or under
(B) 501 – 1000
(C) 1001 or above

_____ 4. Do you have a house system in your school?

(A) Yes
(B) No

Please note:

If you **do not** have **any kind** of house system in your school do not answer the remaining questions as they pertain directly to house system operation.

_____ 5. Are there other types of organizations in your school?

(A) No
(B) Year system
(C) Lower, middle and upper schools
(D) Other

_____

_____ 6. What is the approximate size of the houses in your school?

(A) Under 100
(B) 101 – 150
(C) 151 – 200
(D) 201 – 250
(E) 251 – 300
(F) 301 – 350
(G) 351 – 400
(H) 401 – 500
(I) Above 501

P.T.O.

_____ 7. What facilities do houses have separately for their own operation?

(A) Common room
(3) Dining room
(C) Assembly room
(D) Locker space
(E) Housemasters office
(F) Other facilities

_____

_____ 8. Is your school "purpose built" for the house system?

(A) Yes
(B) No

_____ 9. Do housemasters/mistresses receive a reduction in teaching load?

(A) Yes
(B) No

_____ 10. If "yes", how much of a reduction (Approximately)?

(A) 5%
(B) 10%
(C) 15%
(D) 20%
(E) 25%
(F) 30%
(G) 35%

_____ 11. Do housemasters/mistresses receive additional pay?

(A) Yes
(B) No

_____ 12. If "yes" approximately how much additional pay?

(A) 5%
(B) 10%
(C) 15%
(D) 20%
(E) 25%
(F) 30%

_____ 13. Which of the following activities do the houses in your school engage in? Check more than one if applicable.

(A) Taking school attendance
(B) Keeping routine pupil information
(C) House assemblies
(D) Sports activities
(E) Tutor group social activities
(F) House social activities.
(G) Formal teaching of required subjects
(H) Informal academic tutoring
(I) Pupil counseling
(J) Parent conferences
(K) Others

_____ 14. What are the duties of the housemasters/mistresses in your school? Check more than one if applicable.

(A) Discipline of students in his/her house
(B) Oversight of pupil records & files
(C) Dissemination of information to students
(D) Relationship (interviews & counsels) with parents
(E) Counsels students
(F) Trains house tutors
(G) Oversees planning for house social activities
(H) Refers pupils to social service personnell outside the school when needed (psychologist – social worker, etc).
(I) Other

_____

_____ 15. Does your house have prefects or house captains?

(A) Yes
(B) No

_____ 16. If "yes" are the prefects or house captains chosen from 6th form, 5th form or both?

(A) 6th form only
(B) 5th form only
(C) Both 5th & 6th forms
(D) Other

_____

_____ 17. In your school are there any groups which are **NOT** included in regular multi age houses?

(A) Yes
(B) No

_____ 18. If "yes" do any of the following groups have special houses?

(A) 1st form
(B) 2nd form
(C) 1st & 2nd forms together
(D) 6th form
(E) Other

_____

_____ 19. Are house tutors assigned to a group entering the school and do they follow them through until they leave school?

(A) Yes
(B) No
(C) Other plan

_____

_____ 20. If there is a "personality clash" of serious proportions between a pupil and a housemaster/mistress is it possible for the pupil to be changed from one house to another?

(A) Yes
(B) No
(C) Other plan

_____

P.T.O.

_____ 21. Does the same hold true for pupils in tutor groups – can they be changed from one to another for "personality clashes"?

(A) Yes
(B) No
(C) Other plan

_____

_____ 22. Does the house system in your school use a system of competition among houses?

(A) Yes
(B) No

_____ 23. If "yes" what types of competition are involved?

(A) Academic
(B) Sports
(C) Social behavior (in school)
(D) Help to the Community
(E) Other

_____

_____ 24. Is there competition among individuals in the school for merit points as well as for house points?

(A) Yes
(B) No
(C) Other

_____

_____ 25. Are demerits given for unusually poor work or anti-social behavior?

(A) Yes
(B) No
(C) Other

_____

Opinionnaire

Would you please indicate your opinions on the following items related to house operation?

_____ 1. The house system in your school could be considered in which of the following categories?

(A) **Strong.**

(Many social, sports, academic and counseling activities with an active, interested and able house staff).

(B) **Average.**

(Some guidance, social and sports activities with a variety of interest and ability toward house activities amcng house staff).

(C) **Weak.**

(Used mainly as an attendance checking and information desseminating device organized activities confined mainly to games).

Comment (if any). _____

_____

_____ 2. Do you feel the house system is a valuable device for pastoral care if given enough time and space for its activities?

(A) Yes
(B) No

Comment (if any). _____

_____

_____ 3. Do you feel that other ways of organizing a comprehensive school have more value than the house system?

(A) Yes
(B) No

Comment (if any). _____

_____

_____ 4. If "yes" which of the following do you favor?

(A) Year system
(B) Lower, middle and upper school
(C) Other

_____

P.T.O.

_____ 5. Which of the following "weaknessess" ascribed to the house system in educational literature do you feel are serious? List more than one if applicable.

(A) It fosters too much of a competitive spirit in pupils of the school.
(B) It tends to put house loyalty before school loyalty.
(C) Only a few pupils have the opportunity for leadership roles in the house.
(D) Nearly all leadership roles are given to older students (5th & 6th form).
(E) Not enough time is given from teaching duties for a housemaster/mistress and house tutors to do a good job.
(F) In schools not purpose built for houses the system functions poorly because of lack of space for house operations.
(G) There are not enough trained, experienced and interested people to act as housemasters/mistresses and house tutors.
(H) The house system is an artificial importation from private grammar schools which is alien to comprehensive education.
(I) Since the 1st formers are usually bewildered and lost and the 6th formers are often blaise and uninterested in house matters, the house really consists of only 4 year levels (2–5 forms).
(J) In the minds of many pupils the house system is associated with discipline and therefore the pastoral couseling aspect is difficult to encourage.
(K) Other.

_____

_____

_____ 6. Which of the following "strengths" ascribed to the house system in educational literature do you feel are especially noteworthy. List more than one if applicable.

(A) It provides an opportunity for students to be put in leadership roles as officers of houses.
(B) It encourages motivation among pupils who can strive not only for personal achievement but for the advancement of the house as well.
(C) It provides a wide opportunity for social contact among pupils of varying ages.
(D) It insures that at least one person in the school (tutor) will know the pupil and will care about his/her problems and progress.
(E) It provides a "home base" within a larger school where the pupil feels known and secure
(F) The tutor can act as a "friend in court" for a pupil who gets into trouble with school officials or civic authorities.
(G) It offers chances to participate in group roles, whether on house committees or house athletic teams which might not be available to as many pupils on a school wide basis.
(H) It insures that at least two people – housemaster and tutor will work to help the pupil solve problems which hinder his/her full development.
(I) There is a continuity of counseling and expanded opportunity to know students well when the tutor follows a group through for several years.
(J) Because pupils feel they are known by housemasters/mistresses house tutors there is more effective control of pupils.
(K) If there is streaming in the school the house system with its mixed ability base may provide the only opportunity for children to meet others of varying social backgrounds and academic aptitudes.
(L) Others.

_____

_____

_____ 7. From your experience with it, what is your immediate reaction when "house system" is mentioned?

(A) Highly favorable
(B) Favorable
(C) Uncertain
(D) Unfavorable
(E) Highly unfavorable
(F) Other _____

_____ 8. Would you be in favor of keeping the house system in comprehensive schools based on your own experience with it?

(A) Yes
(B) No
(C) Other _____

_____ 9. Are there any comments you would care to make about the house system?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____ Position of person completing this form.

(A) Headmaster/mistress
(B) Assistant Headmaster/mistress
(C) Housemaster/mistress
(D) Assistant Housemaster/mistress
(E) House tutor

THANK YOU!

Pupil Questionnaire on the House System

In Comprehensive Schools

Please answer the following questions with your honest feeling about the house system in your school. The information received will be used as a part of a study to acquaint American teachers and administrators with the house system. There may be elements which American schools can adapt to help solve some problems they face. No individual person or school will be identified in any report of this survey. **Thank you very much** for your help.

Put the letter of your answer in the space provided by the number of the question.

_____1. In what form are you presently?

(A) 1st
(B) 2nd
(C) 3rd
(D) 4th
(E) 5th
(F) 6th

_____2. What is your sex?

(A) Female
(B) Male

_____3. What type of comprehensive school do you attend?

(A) Boys
(B) Girls
(C) Mixed

_____4. Do you hold any office in the school?

(A) Yes
(B) No

_____5. If "yes" what is the office?

_____

_____6. Do you hold any office in your house?

(A) Yes
(B) No

_____7. If "yes" what is the office?

_____

_____8. What activities do you participate in through your house?

(A) Games
(B) Academic competition among houses
(C) Social activities
(D) Community service activities
(E) Other

_____

_____

P.T.O.

_____ 9. Do you feel your house master/mistress knows you reasonably well?

(A) Yes
(B) No
(C) Don't know

Comments (if any) _____

_____

_____ 10. Do you feel your house tutor knows you reasonably well?

(A) Yes
(B) No
(C) Don't Know

Comments (if any) _____

_____

_____ 11. What are your feelings toward your housemaster/mistress? (Put all the letters which show your feelings).

(A) He/she likes me
(B) I like him/her
(C) I respect him/her
(D) I am afraid of him/her
(E) He/she has my best interests at heart
(F) His/her main duty is to discipline those in his/her house
(G) He/she is too busy with other duties to have enough time for house activities.
(H) Other _____

_____

Comments (if any) _____

_____

_____ 12. What are your feelings toward the activities carried on by your house?

(A) They are interesting
(B) There is plenty of variety in activities
(C) Competition among houses through games is worthwile
(D) Competition among houses through academic activities is worthwhile.
(E) Only a few have a chance to participate in house activities
(F) Only a few have a chance to be leaders.
(G) Other _____

_____

Comments (if any) _____

_____

_____ 13. What are your feelings about the pastoral care of your house?

(A) I take school problems to the housemaster/mistress or house tutor.
(B) I receive helpful advice on school problems
(C) I take personal problems to the housemaster/mistress or house tutor
(D) I receive helpful advice on personal problems.
(E) The discipline given by the housemaster/mistress keeps me from going to him/her with my problems
(F) Other _____

_____

Comments (if any) _____

_____ 14. What is your feeling toward other pupils in your house?

(A) Generally I like them
(B) I feel a loyalty to them as members of my house
(C) I feel the older pupils run the house without much thought for younger ones
(D) I feel a small select group of pupils run the house without much influence from the rest of the house
(E) I get along with those my own age but don't do much with those older or younger than myself.
(F) Other _____

_____

Comments (if any) _____

_____

_____ 15. Do you wish you could change from the house you are now in to another house?

(A) Yes
(B) No
(C) Other _____

_____

_____ 16. If "yes" why do you want to change?

(A) I don't like others in the house
(B) My friends are in another house
(C) I don't like my housemaster/mistress
(D) I don't like my house tutor
(E) Other houses have more interesting activities
(F) Other _____

_____

Comments (if any) _____

_____

_____ 17. Does your house have a regular headquarters with common room and/or dining hall

(A) Yes
(B) No
(C) Other _____

_____

_____ 18. If it does not have these house rooms do you feel this hurts the house operation?

(A) Yes
(B) No

Comments (if any) _____

_____

_____ 19. What is your feeling about the size of your house?

(A) Too big
(B) Too small
(C) About right

Comments (if any) _____

_____

P.T.O.

_____ 20. Do you feel your house tutor should have had you in class to really know you well?

(A) Yes
(B) No
(C) Doesn't make any difference

Comments (if any) _____

_____

_____ 21. What is your feeling toward your house?

(A) Great loyalty
(B) Some loyalty
(C) Little loyalty

Comments (if any) _____

_____

_____ 22. What is your feeling toward awarding "house points" for individual academic excellence? Put more than one letter if needed to show your feeling.

(A) Good idea
(B) Bad idea
(C) Good and bad points about balance
(D) It encourages me to work harder
(E) It does not affect my effort in school at all

Comments (if any) _____

_____

_____ 23. If you had the chance to "keep", "modify", or "do away" with the house system what would be your decision?

(A) Keep it as it is
(B) Modify it considerably
(C) Do away with it

Comments (if any) _____

_____

_____ 24. If you answered "modify it", in the previous question how would you like it changed?

_____

_____

_____

_____

_____

THANK YOU FOR YOUR HELP!

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